



# THE INDEPENDENT

N° 3,401

SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1997

WEATHER: Wet and misty

(RR65p) 60p

**Andrew  
Davis  
Man of hope  
and glory**  
the long weekend



**Mick  
Jagger  
Hips, lips and  
oh-so fit**  
the magazine



**FREE  
BOOK  
OFFER**

p16  
the long weekend

**SINGLE  
VOUCHER  
ONLY TO  
COLLECT**

Charles  
HIGSON



Last orders: The actors Michael Elphick and Peter O'Toole and the writer Keith Waterhouse, author of the hit West End play *Jeffrey Bernard Is Unwell* (in which O'Toole created the title-role), at the Coach and Horses pub in Soho, central London, following the funeral of Jeff Bernard, who immortalised the pub and its regulars in his 'Low Life' column for the Spectator magazine

Photograph: John Voos

## A vodka marked the spot as a low-life hero passed into legend

All it came down to in the end was a modest button-backed leather pew in the Coach and Horses, a table in front of it and a vodka and soda.

Yesterday people stood and looked at the site of Jeffrey Bernard's tiny kingdom and marvelled to think that, from this utterly commonplace corner of a common place pub, a legend was born.

Bernard, who died last Thursday at 65, was a man world-famous for being his disreputable self. He was, in a sense, the first "lifestyle" writer.

Year after sodden year, his "Low Life" column in the Spectator kept the magazine's thoughtful, right-wing readership up to speed with what lesser mortals were doing - drinking, smoking, gambling and forgetting who they had had sex with the previous night.

His funeral yesterday brought the louche, the sleazy, the grot-blossomed, the ash-faced, the wrecked, the sullen and the unarguably glamorous to the West London Crematorium at Kensal Green, immortalised in Chresterton's poem *The Rolling English Road*, as the place we shall all wind up, en route to paradise.

The poem was read by Peter O'Toole, his eyes glimmering bright, his tie red, his shirt white, his suit blue, like a walking deconstructed Union Flag.

Around him, writers, wits,

drinkers, stay-up-all-night

philosophers and brazen former

squeezers listened to this triumphant vindication of this rolling English drunkard.

Alice Thomas Ellis, a tragic

vision in monochrome *magnum*,

looked as though she had

walked off the set of *Medea*.

Beryl Bainbridge looked girlish, Jonathan Meades looked unusually genial, Paul Raymond (of *RevueBarfame*) was unrecognisable.

Present and past editors of the Spectator tucked to and fro.

Alexander Chancellor made

a speech which included the

line: "Well, the paparazzi are definitely not responsible for this".

"I was talking to Charles Moore the other day," said Frank Johnson, "and told him, you know I think I was the only

grandiose sentiment, with such a concentration of cynics around."

"Jeff always said it would be just his luck to go on the same day as *The Queen Mother*" said Keith Waterhouse. "But to die just in between Princess Diana and Mother Teresa, with George Bush as a kind of runner up - well it's ridiculous."

And did you see the guy who was cremated before him? Alf Fletcher, a bookie. There was a floral picture of a horse and rider, winning a race. It was perfect - Jeff Bernard piped at the post again."

As everyone lit up Marlboro Lights (the crematorium lobby, bantered by a sudden thunderstorm, became a grimly determined smokers convention), a controversy blew up.

The family had decided to hold the post-funeral wake at the Groucho. But a bard-line faction insisted instead the Coach and Horses, Bernard's old watering hole, would do.

At the pub, the landlord,

Norman Balon, bunched like a vulture, a man for the word "hangdog" is far too ebullient, admitted his disappointment.

"I was wounded," he said. "Jeff's been coming in here for 30 or 40 years. Day after day he was the first customer. He was there at 11am when the doors opened. He had his stool and he'd complain if anyone else sat on it. He'd say, 'I've been sitting there for thirty fucking years.'

"He tried to be disliked," said Alexander Chancellor in his speech, "but it never seemed to work."

At the Coach and Horses, O'Toole is drinking pints and Michael Elphick, currently starring in *Pgymnasium*, is persuading photographers to buy him a drink.

Norman prowls about, violet-shirted and growly. Bruce Bernard arrives to shepherd stragglers to the Groucho wake. A bleak tray of salami and mortadella sits wanly on the bar. A drooping red-head orders another large Bell's. O'Toole, drinking pints, widens his blue eyes in amazement at what someone has said.

Sob in September. Jeff's patch. We could be here all afternoon.

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## news

## significant shorts

**Strike threat over as BA and union shake hands**

The threat of further strikes at British Airways ended yesterday when the airline agreed a deal with the transport union.

The settlement follows several weeks of negotiations after a crippling three-day strike in the summer. The Transport and General Workers' Union tabled proposals which the airline has accepted will achieve the £12m in savings it wanted in its cabin crew operation. The dispute cost BA an estimated £125m in July over flight cancellations, which continued for several days after the strike ended because of the large number of cabin crew workers who went sick. Both BA and the TGWU emphasised a fresh start. Bob Ayling, chief executive of British Airways, said: "Today's agreement signals a genuinely new beginning for relations and [a] spirit of co-operation", while Bill Morris, TGWU general secretary, said: "I believe the union and the company are committed to building a constructive long-term relationship in a spirit of partnership."

**Greenham Common fence to fall**

The fence that has surrounded Greenham Common for 50 years will be pulled down on Sunday marking a final victory for peace campaigners. The wire fence at the former American airbase in Berkshire will be dismantled and the 800-acre site returned to common land.

David Rendel, MP for Newbury, along with district councillors and members of the public, will push the fence to the ground to mark the start of the airbase's return to heathland. Greenham Common was the site of a continuous women's peace protest from 1981 until the final American Cruise missiles were removed in March 1991; the demonstrations ended with the closure of the base. The two-year restoration programme will create the largest area of open heathland in Berkshire.

**Greenpeace should be so lucky**

 Rock stars and celebrities are backing a call to the Government for action on the threat to the climate from fossil fuels, and have signed a Greenpeace petition to be presented to Tony Blair underlining the growing demand for a halt to North Atlantic oil exploration. Among the 113,000 signatures are Damon Albarn from Blur, Jarvis Cocker from Pulp, Kylie Minogue (left), Bryan Adams, Suede, Supergrass, comedians Ben Elton, David Baddiel and Greg Proops, as well as presenters Zoe Ball and Denise Van Outen. Greenpeace wants the Government to encourage investment in renewable sources of energy, like solar and wave power. The petition will be sent to the Prime Minister before crucial climate-change talks at Kyoto, Japan, in December.

**Drink-driving mother jailed**

A mother who drove a Ford Escort packed with at least nine young children while she was twice over the legal alcohol limit was sent to prison for three months yesterday.

Amanda Ryan-McCurdy, 24, who admitted driving with excess alcohol and with an overloaded car, was also banned from driving for two years. The police stopped Ryan-McCurdy, from Greater Manchester, in July after noticing the children crammed into the back of her Escort. Manchester City magistrates court heard Karen Nolan, for the prosecution, said the officers had found 13 children, aged between six months and four years, in the car. The mother claimed there had only been nine children, but the police counted 13, because other children had arrived after she was stopped. Martin Jones, defending, said she had been at a party the night before, and did not realise she was still over the limit. Mr Jones added that she was taking the children, including her daughter, home after their parents had failed to pick them up following a football match.

**Protesters lose bid to halt runway**

A renewed bid to halt the construction of Manchester Airport's second runway failed yesterday.

Protesters Philip Benn and Philip Johnson, both 23, asked the Court of Appeal to reconsider a judge's refusal to grant them leave to challenge the legality of the decision, taken in January, to give planning permission for the project. Mr Benn and Mr Johnson, from Manchester, had hoped to argue that the Secretaries of State for the Environment and Transport had failed to take enough account of the risk in the environment and a possible air accident over densely populated areas. But Lord Justice Nourse said they had launched their challenge in March – outside the six-week time limit, which ran from the January decision. The protesters had claimed that the clock started ticking from 20 February, bringing them within the deadline.

**Car bomb follows shotgun deaths**

The shooting dead of one of Ireland's biggest drug dealers, Patrick Farrell, 49, found in Drogheada beside the body of his partner, Lorraine Farrell, 29, was followed yesterday by a crude car bomb attempt to blow up a taxi firm where Ms Farrell's mother worked. Gardai said they were keeping an open mind on the two deaths, but initial reports suggest Mr Farrell, suspected of being behind a major cannabis smuggling racket, was shot dead by Ms Farrell, who was not related. She apparently then shot herself with the same horned double-barrelled shotgun. A suicide note was left for the dead woman's sister, Edel. Unconfirmed reports said Lorraine Farrell had also inquired about obtaining two graves in a local cemetery. Patrick Farrell, from County Armagh, left a wife and three children living in Newry, County Down, in Northern Ireland. Alan Murdoch

**Seasonal high for the Proms**

The Last Night of The Proms tonight will conclude a season that has the highest recorded attendances in Proms history. Figures released last night show that attendances for the 1997 season reached 255,000, the highest figure since records have been kept. A programme change for tonight's show will add 'Jupiter' from *The Planets*, by Gustav Holst, which includes the melody later set to the words, "I Vow To Thee My Country", one of the hymns sung at the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales.

David Lister

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# THE CURTAIN FALLS. (AND IT BRINGS THE HOUSE DOWN.)

TONIGHT 7.30PM. THE LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS. AND LIKE EVERY PROM BEFORE, IT'S LIVE ON THREE. SO FOR A REALLY MOVING EXPERIENCE, STAY JUST WHERE YOU ARE.

3

## people



Mary Robinson: bowing out of Presidency after seven eventful years

## The Irish bid fond farewell to 'irreplaceable' Mary Robinson

**T**he light in the window she made famous signalling the emigrant masses of Ireland's diaspora had not been forgotten when it was extinguished, and at noon Mary Robinson signed off as Irish President after nearly seven whirlwind years in the post.

With United Nations tags already on her Geneva-bound luggage, the departing head of state, still just 53, joked that her husband Nick would now no longer be walking three steps behind her, but conceded she was feeling mixed emotions.

Yesterday, she was widely praised for the way she took a remote and ceremonial Presidency out to the people, using it to encourage the "can do" dynamism of community initiative in projects for the handicapped, the elderly, travellers and the marginalised. She said her lasting memory of her term "would be the smell of fresh paint everywhere I go". Her aim, she said, had been to be "a catalyst for self-development," and reaching across the border into Ulster "taking risks for peace".

### Superwoman passes on secrets of her success

Nicola Horlick, the City high-flyer who left her £1m-a-year investment banking job after a spectacular public row with her bosses, last night advised the superwomen of the future on how to get ahead.

Mrs Horlick, a former pensions fund manager with Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and mother of five children, was scheduled to offer a gathering of head girls tips on balancing careers and motherhood.

However, her audience – all pupils at private schools belonging to the Girls' Day School Trust – may know her best not for her ability to juggle infants and investments but for her still in making a media drama out of a crisis.

Mrs Horlick, pictured, already well known in the City for her banking track record and earning power, burst on to the public stage last January after being suspended from her post. She had tried, her employers claimed, to poach senior colleagues to join a rival bank in London, incensed at claims of greed and dishonesty. Mrs Horlick resigned, hired a top-drawer lawyer and a spin doctor and embarked on an extraordinary campaign to clear her name.

Pursued by reporters and vowing: "I will be heard", she confronted her bosses at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and demanded a meeting with the parent bank's management committee.

Her loyalty, she claimed, had been shown in her willingness to return early to work, new-born baby on her arm as she rushed between meetings, during an earlier crisis at the bank.

Eight months on, however, the bank and Mrs Horlick have not been reunited, and the fund manager known in the City as "superwoman" is building up new business interests.

Lucy Ward

### Python star takes to the rails

Rail buff and *Monty Python* star Michael Palin, who recently admitted on television to being a former trainspotter, is to have an engine named after him.

Palin, who is a well-known campaigner for better public transport and president of pressure group Transport 2000, will give his name to a local train running through East Anglia, the region where he spent much of his childhood.

He joins a number of other celebrities, including Della Smith and Sir Alf Ramsey, who have given their names to trains.

Andy Cooper, Managing Director of Anglia Railways, said yesterday: "I am delighted that Michael Palin is giving his name to one of our trains. He is recognised for his travels across the world and for his interest and support for railways and public transport in general."

Amanda Kelly

### Artist quits academy over refusal to show Hindley picture

The acclaimed British sculptor, Michael Sandie, known for his spare and functional work in metal, has resigned from the Royal Academy in protest at the inclusion of the contentious portrait of the child killer Myra Hindley in its new Sensation exhibition.

"I have had enough," Mr Sandie following the meeting with fellow academicians, several of whom were also incensed by what they saw as an insensitive decision to display Marcus Harvey's painting in which the Moors murderer's face is depicted with the handprints of young children.

The academy voted 26 to 19 in

favour of hanging the portrait, called *Myra*, in spite of the pleas of one of the murdered children's mothers, Winnie Johnson.

The *Sensation* exhibition, which opens to the public on Thursday next week, is drawn from the collection of Charles Saatchi and also features the work of former Turner prize winners Rachel Whiteread and Damien Hirst.

Sandie, 61, said he had come to object to what he saw as the academy being manipulated by its exhibitions secretary, Norman Rosenthal. For him, this new and deliberately shocking exhibition was the last straw, he said, adding

that the academy's magazine had also been hijacked, becoming not much more than a propaganda sheet for contemporary art.

"Should the Academy be putting on a major show for the benefit of Mr Saatchi who, though heralded as an important collector of contemporary art, is to all intents and purposes a dealer?" he asked.

Artists Anthony Green, Craigie Aitchison and Peter Coker are among the other academicians either opposed to the Hindley portrait, or to what they regard as the attention-seeking nature of the new exhibition itself.

Vanessa Thorpe

## briefing

## HEALTH

### Surprise finding points to cancer risk from fruit

Eating fruit and vegetables which is thought to help prevent cancer may make the disease worse once it has struck, scientists suggest.

High doses of antioxidants such as vitamin C are believed to prevent cancer by mopping up free radicals which can damage DNA. However, a study by Dutch researchers has shown that free radicals can also kill cancer cells. If so, antioxidants may be bad for cancer sufferers because they remove free radicals.

The study, by scientists at Nijmegen University in the Netherlands, involved creating a cancerous cell line by damaging the P53 suppressor gene which makes a protein triggering programmed cell death ("apoptosis") in tumour cells. With the gene damaged, tumour cells are able to survive and spread.

The researchers then raised the level of antioxidants in the cancer cells so that the free radical levels fell. This reduced the death rate of the cancer cells, they say. The results, reported in *New Scientist* are to be published in an academic scientific journal later. The researchers say an anti-cancer drug capable of generating free radicals may be effective against cancer but is still a long way off.

Jeremy Laurence

## DEFENCE

### Hi-tech maps aid battle plans

Army chiefs yesterday disclosed how frontline warfare is being revolutionised by the ability to produce detailed maps directly on the battlefield. Satellite photographs, digital information and visual observations are put together to give accurate guides to the terrain.

The Military Survey, which is celebrating its 250th anniversary this year, is now creating these maps for the United Nations in Bosnia. Computer technology advances are also allowing commanders and pilots to "fly through" 3-Dimensional maps before entering battle so that they can view hidden ground and concealed positions.

## TECHNOLOGY

### Japanese nanomachine first

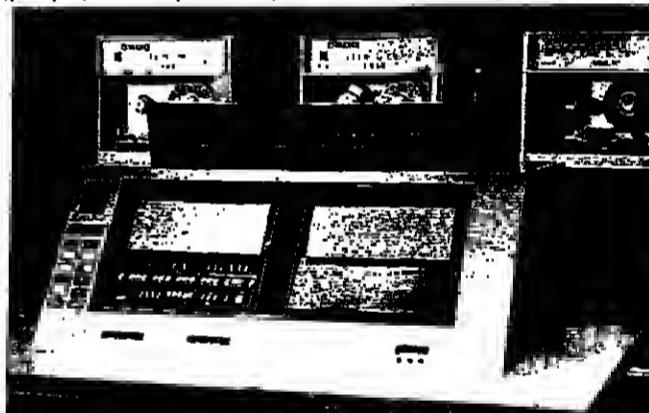
Computers have been getting smaller since they were invented in the Forties. In the early days of computing, a typical machine might occupy an entire building. By the Sixties, the advent of transistors meant that computers could fit inside a single room (below). The microprocessor revolution in the Seventies paved the way for today's desktop and hand-held machines, which can have thousands of times the power and storage capacity of their garrulous ancestors.

Now scientists are a step closer to producing microscopic computers. "Nanomachines" are devices that act on the microscopic or even molecular scale. A team of scientists in Japan has succeeded in making a binary switch – the fundamental working unit of any computer – out of a single molecule.

A report in this week's *New Scientist* outlines how the string-like molecules, of a chemical called azobenzene, can act as a locator for another molecule, cyclohexatin, that occupies one of two places – a binary "zero" or "one" – on the "string" depending whether the molecule is exposed to visible or ultraviolet light. The whole assembly, known as a rotaxane, was created by Naotoshi Nakashima and colleagues at Nagasaki University.

Jon McCleerty of Bristol University described the work as a "breakthrough", but added that practical applications may be some way off as the system takes several minutes to operate - millions of times slower than conventional electronic systems.

Michael Hanlon



## COMPUTING

### New York faces Millennium blast

New York city, along with the world's other major conurbations, faces significant disruption at the turn of the century as a result of the so-called computer "millennium bug".

At midnight on 31 January 1999, millions of computers all over the world will click over to the wrong new year – 1900 rather than 2000. This error is due to programming conventions established in the 1960s and 1970s when computers had much less memory than they do today, and carrying a four-digit year took up too much capacity.

The consultancy Corporation 2000 warned this week that despite being better prepared than most cities, New York, the commercial capital of the US, will be hit badly by the bug. The implications are serious: the banking system, tax and welfare offices, the police and New York's social services could all face catastrophe if the problem is not dealt with quickly. State Governor George Pataki has ordered all technology initiatives to be concentrated on defusing the Millennium Bomb.

## FARMING

### Poor grain harvest expected

The UK is facing its worst grain harvest for many years, farmers were warned this week. Prices for grain are at a 20-year low, and there are significant shortages with the quality of this year's crop. Paul Kirk, chief executive of Dalgety Agriculture, said this week that 1997 would be "the most challenging harvest for UK farmers for many years." Prices were at a 20-year low, he said, and the quality problems stemmed from extreme weather conditions.

There was a drought over much of the country early in the year, followed by a cold wet June. Heavy rain last month delayed the harvest.

Dalgety forecasts that the total grain harvest this year would be 23.5 million tonnes, down a million tonnes on last year. Most of the reduction is in the wheat crop.



Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in 1996

news



Controversial: Kitty Kelley says she will show the details of her problems that put our own in the shade

## Queen of dirt diggers ready for a royal row

A new book on the Windsors is out next week. David Usborne reports

Just as half the nation is pledging to swear off the palace soap opera and give back a modicum of privacy to the Windsors, in the wake of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, fresh and dastardly temptation is upon us.

With timing that is either brilliant or unthinkably distasteful, the American publisher Warner Books is releasing next Wednesday *The Royals*, a biography (or seductively unauthorised) of the Windsors going back to the First World War, written by the poisoned pen of pio, and famously ruthless, Kitty Kelley.

It will be little solace to the Palace that the work will not be published in Britain. That, of course, has to do with unkind content and tough British libel laws. Thanks to the wonders of e-mail, not to mention the postal service, its pages will not take long in reaching British shores.

The least that the book promises to do is furrow brows of British editors, who must decide now much can be passed

on to readers without risking breach of the new puritanism of the post-Diana era.

In the US, *People* magazine decided to scrap plans to run extracts of the book next week; precisely, a spokesperson said: "Just inappropriate right now". Instead, the magazine, which is also part of the Warner media empire, will run an interview with Ms Kelley.

At worst, however, the book, which has been four years in the writing and, according to Ms Kelley, is the fruit of 1,000 interviews, could trigger fresh crisis for the Windsors at a time when their standing is already low.

The anticipation is considerable for multiple reasons. First, there is the reputation of Ms Kelley as a merciless digger of dirt that was established by her previous biographies, most notably

of her interviews. Warner Books in New York, meanwhile, has further stirred fascination by throwing an impenetrable blanket of secrecy around the book. British journalists trying to find it – it was printed at a secret location – have been frustrated.

Showing no restraint, Warner actually moved up publication from 23 September to next Wednesday, citing irresistible pressure from bookshops themselves evidently anxious to cash in on the surge in curiosity.

Not that tiffs of what the book alleges have not been widely reported.

Ms Kelley herself has herself been offering obscure hints. In an interview with the *Kansas City Star* in June, she responded thus to a question about the Windsors: "Have you ever been around a dysfunctional family? This book is going to make us all feel reassured by our own dysfunctions. Our dysfunctions are going to look like mere eccentricities. Theirs are played out on a huge scale".

## Charles and princes thank public for their sympathy

Kim Sengupta

Prince Charles and his sons William and Harry have expressed their thanks to the public for their sympathy and support following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. The royal family has received more than 300,000 messages of condolence.

It was also announced yesterday that the Prince of Wales will carry out his first public engagement since the fatal accident in Paris and take part in a walkabout.

The Prince and his advisers are believed to have considered postponing the visit to Greater Manchester, which was arranged before the Princess died. However, it was decided it would be more appropriate to carry out the engagement at St James's Palace, the

Prince has received 7,000 faxes and telegrams of condolence as well as a large number of messages on the Internet. They will be seen by the Princes, William and Harry.

Cash donations are being forwarded to Kensington Palace for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund. Stamps from envelopes will also be used to benefit charities.

A team of volunteers began the task of clearing the field of flowers outside Kensington Palace yesterday morning. Around 20 members of the Woman's Royal Voluntary Service and 300 Royal Parks staff began sifting through the hundreds of thousands of bouquets, messages and tributes.

Elton John's rerecorded version of "Candle in the Wind" became available in Paris yesterday

Dodi Fayed also died, was yesterday released for burial near his family home in Brittany today, effectively ending the possibility of further tests to establish his physical and mental condition at the time of the accident two weeks ago.

Two women tourists jailed for walking off with armfuls of tributes left in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, were yesterday freed by an appeal judge who wanted to reflect the country's "spirit of compassion" in the wake of her death. They had each been sentenced to 28 days.

Agnes Sherska, 50, and Maria Rigozova, 56, both from Slovakia, said they adored the Princess and had only wanted to keep the tributes taken from outside Westminster Abbey as "everlasting" memories to give to the people of their country.

# Walter Mitty life of butler 'millionaire'

Jojo Moyes

A Belgravian butler who served up lavish banquets of wild boar and £1,500 bottles of Chateau Petrus in his employers' home before stealing their £59,000 Bentley Turbo was jailed for three-and-a-half years yesterday.

Percival Hole, described by Judge David Elfer as having "a streak of Walter Mitty" so loved the high life that when his employers travelled abroad he posed as a millionaire and hired his own butler and cook to impress his pub friends.

The butler was so convincing in his role as host that his friends never suspected the truth. Neither did his employers, the Thistle hotel group chairman Rodney Price and his wife, Loen, until they returned one day to find him, their car and £2,500 missing.

By the time Hole was arrested the car had been sold and most of the proceeds spent on an orgy of first-class travel, champagne, cocaine, and prostitutes. Hole now wants to atone for his wrong-doing by becoming a monk.

Judge Elfer told the butler he accepted that alcohol abuse was partly the reason for his actions, but added: "You obviously had a yen for what you considered to be the high life and you were prepared to stoop to dishonesty to achieve it."

The court heard that when Hole was hired by Mr Price in 1995 to work at his £4 million home, the butler hid the fact that he had a criminal past. He received a salary of about £21,500, with all accommodation and expenses paid.

Martin Bowyer, prosecut-



An artist's impression of Percival Hole

ing, said Hole, as part of the "enormous responsibility and trust" invested in him, had been given a Credit bank card to pay his employers' household bills.

The butler became a fixture at the Nag's Head pub in London's Belgravia, where he established a reputation as a "bon viveur". Hole would take pub regulars to the Prices' Regency house, pretending portraits there were of his ancestors.

"Your employers, decent, honourable and trusting people, left you for many months at a time, in charge of their household here in this country," the judge said. "But you wanted more. You wanted the trappings and the appearance of your employers' wealth and you abused

their trust. So in January of this year you decided upon a scheme to make that sort of wealth easily available and that involved the sale of their Bentley," he said.

Hole involved "clear-headed planning". Hole duped Mrs Price, an Australian, into giving him the documents for the car by telling her English law required them to be kept in the vehicle. He re-registered the car in his name and sold it for £56,000, before emptying the safe and disappearing.

Hole had planned to travel to Estonia and invest in a timber company a fellow drinker had told him was a "good bet". But on the way, in Germany, he could not "resist the pampered life that money could buy. There were first-class fares, air and rail, good hotels and bodyguards at £200 a day, prostitutes, drugs and drink, until illness caught up with you."

Hole abandoned his business plans and returned to Britain, booking into a Manchester hotel under an assumed name.

The judge said there were two sides to Hole's character, one of which had involved working with a voluntary group helping London's homeless. But the other side indicated a "total lack of remorse until caught."

Hole, who was ordered to return the £2,700 still remaining, bowed briefly to the judge before he was led to the cells.

Owen Davies, defending, said his client had had a genuine change of heart. "He is intending to become a monk and he has had a visit from the abbot of one of the monasteries on the edge of London," he said.

## IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

Five sections for the best in news, features, sport, business, travel, property and money

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Michael Bywater remembers his friend Jeffrey Bernard

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The very latest official UCAS lists of university and college places

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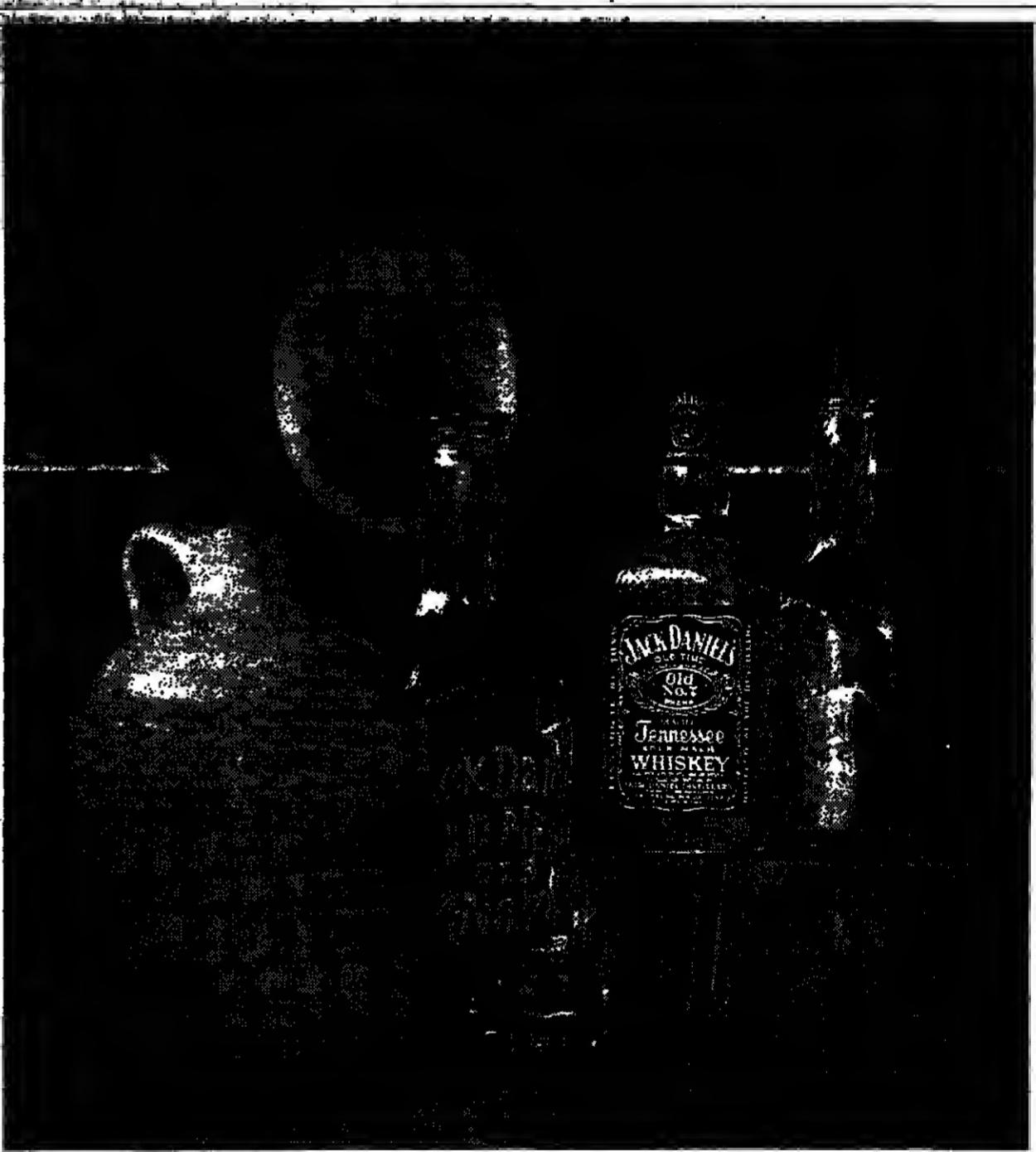
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### IT IS. ARE YOU?



We hope you'll join us in celebrating Mr. Jack's birthday. Look for details at your favorite pub or restaurant.

THIS SEPTEMBER marks Mr. Jack Daniel's 151st birthday. Or maybe, as some say, his 147th.

The exact date of our founder's birth remains a mystery to this day (folks weren't too good at keeping records in those days). Some in Lynchburg say he was born in 1850, others claim it was 1846. While no one is exactly sure just when Mr. Jack was born, those who enjoy a smooth sippin' Tennessee Whiskey, we believe, are mighty glad he was.



JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



## Scotland's historic vote

## as parties assemble their future plans



Floating feeling: Celebrating the Yes, Yes vote for devolution in Parliament Square, Edinburgh yesterday

Photograph: Brian Hains

## Blair rallies the Welsh to say Yes

**Tony Heath**

Crowds jammed the centre of Cardiff yesterday to hear Tony Blair declare: "Scotland has begun a process that Wales should carry on next week".

The prime minister flew to Cardiff to try to ensure a Celtic double next Thursday when Wales delivers its own devolution verdict.

Climbing onto the bandstand in Churchill Way, Mr Blair said devolution was about bringing government closer to the people - government in which services used by the people were

which is run as a worker's co-operative.

Labour's partners in the moves toward devolution also joined in the euphoria generated by Scotland's Yes vote.

The leader of Plaid Cymru, Dafydd Wigley said: "Scotland has shown Wales the way. On 18 September we must ensure that we are not left behind. Scotland appears to have established a parliament with a massive majority and Wales must take this opportunity to follow suit."

On his second campaigning day in Wales the Liberal De-



Tony Blair in Cardiff yesterday. Photograph: Rob Stratton

dealt with by the people.

"We need a strong voice for Wales, bringing better schools, better jobs and better hospitals. We don't want a country run by quangos", he said to loud cheers.

The Chancellor, Gordon Brown was also in Wales to campaign. He was met by Ruth Davies, the Welsh Secretary, who presented him with a large card congratulating Scotland in three languages - English, Welsh and Scottish gaelic.

Mr Brown then drove to Merthyr Tydfil to campaign in the founder of the Labour Party, Keir Hardie's old stronghold. He then went on to visit Trawsfynydd Colliery in the Cynon Valley

mocrat leader Paddy Ashdown said: "Wider constitutional change is under way following the Scottish poll."

The umbrella Yes campaign were anxious to remind Wales that a high turnout to underpinning devolution was important. Darren Hall, the national organiser said:

"We are extremely encouraged with the Scottish results. We believe it will give our supporters a huge boost. The No campaign was not too dismayed. Nigel Evans, the Swansea-born Tory MP for Ribble Valley in Lancashire, said he did not believe that Wales would follow. "We will not be bounced into copying that result," he said.

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If you tell your girlfriend, will she think less of you?

When you have a problem, it's the most natural thing in the world to want to talk it through with someone.

Sometimes, though, this creates another problem: who's the best person to confide in?

An obvious choice would be a close friend. But let's face it, we don't always choose our friends for their amazing powers of tact, diplomacy and discretion. Tell one person, and you may end up telling the world.

You may be lucky enough to be able to talk to someone in your family. Then again, you may be one of the large number of people who find talking to your nearest and dearest agonisingly embarrassing.

A girlfriend or boyfriend? If you can, great. But sometimes we don't want to expose our weaknesses to those who fancy us.

And sometimes your relationship is the very problem you want to discuss.

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## festival of science

## The real animal magic is how they talk to each other

Scientists plug into nature's quietest sounds. Charles Arthur reports

If Dr Dolittle really did talk to the animals, then he must have had the most remarkable vocal cords, not to mention ears, wings and (if he spoke at all to fish) a swim bladder.

The reason, the British Association heard yesterday, is that scientists have discovered that species as diverse as elephants, bats, bees and haddock all use entirely different systems to communicate across a super-human range of frequencies. The topics, though, tend to focus on two eternal topics: sex and food.

Elephants use their vocal cords to generate infrasonic noises, ranging from 15 to 35 Hertz (Hz), according to Dr Bill Langbauer of Pittsburgh Zoo in the United States. "They can communicate over more than two miles," he said. "But the majority of it is inaudible to humans. The normal human hearing range is from 20 Hz to 20,000 Hz."

The newly recognised noises "explain a lot of behaviour that was a mystery before, such as how elephants co-ordinate their behaviour across long distances."

A principal use is by the female elephant, which only becomes receptive to sex for about four days in every four years. "They use infrasonic calls lasting four to five seconds, repeated for up to 45 minutes," Dr Langbauer said.

"It's really well-designed for letting other elephants know where she is, because the higher-pitched harmonics are attenuated with distance. The more harmonics the male ele-

phant hears, the nearer he knows she is."

However, bees go a step further. German scientists have now determined that when a bee "dances" inside the hive to describe the direction and distance to food, the bees nearby actually "hear" the air currents it generates - and those are as loud to them as standing near

a jet plane taking off would be to us.

"We have known about the dance of the bee since 1946," said Professor Axel Michelson of Odense University. "But what was not explained was how they could see this, since the bee is often absolutely dark."

Scientists suspected that the air pressure created by the

movements of the dancing bee's wings, allied to the wagging of its body - all of which encode the journey to food - might trigger the surrounding bees' antennae. By sensing the changes in air currents, the bees could work out what movements were being made, even in the dark.

To test this, the researchers built a robot bee from brass

with a single wing made of a piece of razor blade. By wagging the wing and moving the body, they found that the bees were reacting to changes in air pressure caused by the wing flapping up and down.

"The air moves at about 1m per second over the wings, which for us would be like getting close to a jet engine," he

said. "But the pressure falls off very quickly with distance. A metre away, the surrounding bees cannot feel anything. When you live somewhere with 50,000 bees, it's valuable to have a way of telling something that's not audible to everybody."

Bees turn out to have two systems for detecting food and objects - depending on whether

they feed on moving items, such as insects and small animals, or static ones, such as fruit (or in the case of the vampire bat) blood from sleeping animals.

Professor David Pye, of the University of London, found that bats which detect moving objects use a single frequency sound, because when that is reflected back it will be shifted up-

Dinner time: Fruit bats emit a sweep of frequencies to accurately determine the distance to their prey  
Photograph: P Morris/Ardea

wards or downwards, rather like the whistle of a moving train. By contrast, bats which rely on static prey put out a sweep of frequencies, which is better for measuring distance.

However, possibly the strangest noises of all belong to the common haddock. Professor Tony Hawkins, director of the Scottish Marine Laboratory, explained that male haddock make a knocking sound by contracting the muscles in their swim bladder, the fluid-filled sac that lets them control their buoyancy. The pressure wave is transmitted outwards to other fish.

The knocking sound normally indicates aggression, and is repeated about once a second. But when a female approaches the noise becomes more rapid, soon reaching many beats per second - requiring muscle twitches faster than any other vertebrate animal.

"The male sticks his fins up, and becomes worked up, and then the two fish embrace - they really wrap their fins around each other - and the noise from the male gets louder. Then the female releases millions of eggs and the male releases sperm, which are fertilised in the water around them."

It is, he adds, "one of the more interesting animals." Dr Dolittle would surely agree - if his Victorian nutmeg would allow, of course.

(To preserve the dignity of the humble haddock, *The Independent* is not carrying a photograph of its more intimate moments.)



## Top scientist urges inquiry into BSE saga

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

The new president of the British Association yesterday called for a full-scale judicial inquiry into the "disaster of BSE" during the past 10 years.

Colin Blakemore, a leading neuroscientist, told the association's Festival of Science, meeting in Leeds, that he believed any such inquiry should also set levels of compensation for the families of people who have died from the "new variant" of Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (v-CJD), which the government acknowledged last year was probably caused by exposure to the infectious agent of BSE, or "mad cow disease".

Professor Blakemore, who holds the chair of physiology at Oxford University, now also represents scientists across the country in their efforts to com-

municate their work. He said he gave up eating beef in 1987 as soon as BSE, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy, became publicised because he had "recognition of the possibility of a new disease".

He also blamed successive Tory administrations since 1985 for cutting back on government-funded science research, which might have been able to spot BSE more quickly, and forecast more accurately whether it could pass to humans.

He said one problem was that scientists' opinions about the dangers posed by BSE were "channelled through a small number of mouths. I think sometimes, scientists were saying more what they thought government wanted to hear than what they felt".

Professor Blakemore said the only way to prevent that

## Left-handers lose out in art of deception

Left-handed people are less good at telling when they are being lied to than right-handers, according to a scientist who enlisted the population of Yorkshire to establish his findings, writes Charles Arthur.

But other research has found that lying does not necessarily indicate advanced intelligence: children as young as two or three can be expert liars, the

British Association was told yesterday.

The left-handed bias towards gullibility emerged in an experiment on Thursday night carried out by Yorkshire Television, which showed a programme in which a presenter told two contradictory stories about her childhood. Viewers then rang one of four phone numbers depending on their handedness and which story they thought was true. The result showed a significant difference between the two groups, said Dr Richard Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire.

Among the 4,900 respondents, 66 per cent of left-handers spotted the lie, compared to 72.5 per cent of right-handers. The difference is statistically significant. "It may be because of brain function," said Dr Wiseman. "Right-handers predominantly use the left hemisphere more than left-handers, and the left hemisphere deals with language."

"It may also be perception of emotion" when the presenter was telling the truth she was more enthusiastic, and maybe right-handed people are better at picking up enthusiasm."

Humans begin working on the art of deception from a young age, the meeting was told by Dr Vasudevi Reddy of the University of Portsmouth. "Well before the age of four, we found children were lying, not just in simple ways, but using fairly complex tricks..." she said. "It's probably a mistake to assume that children need a clear idea of how minds work before lying. They are into the practice before they develop the theory."

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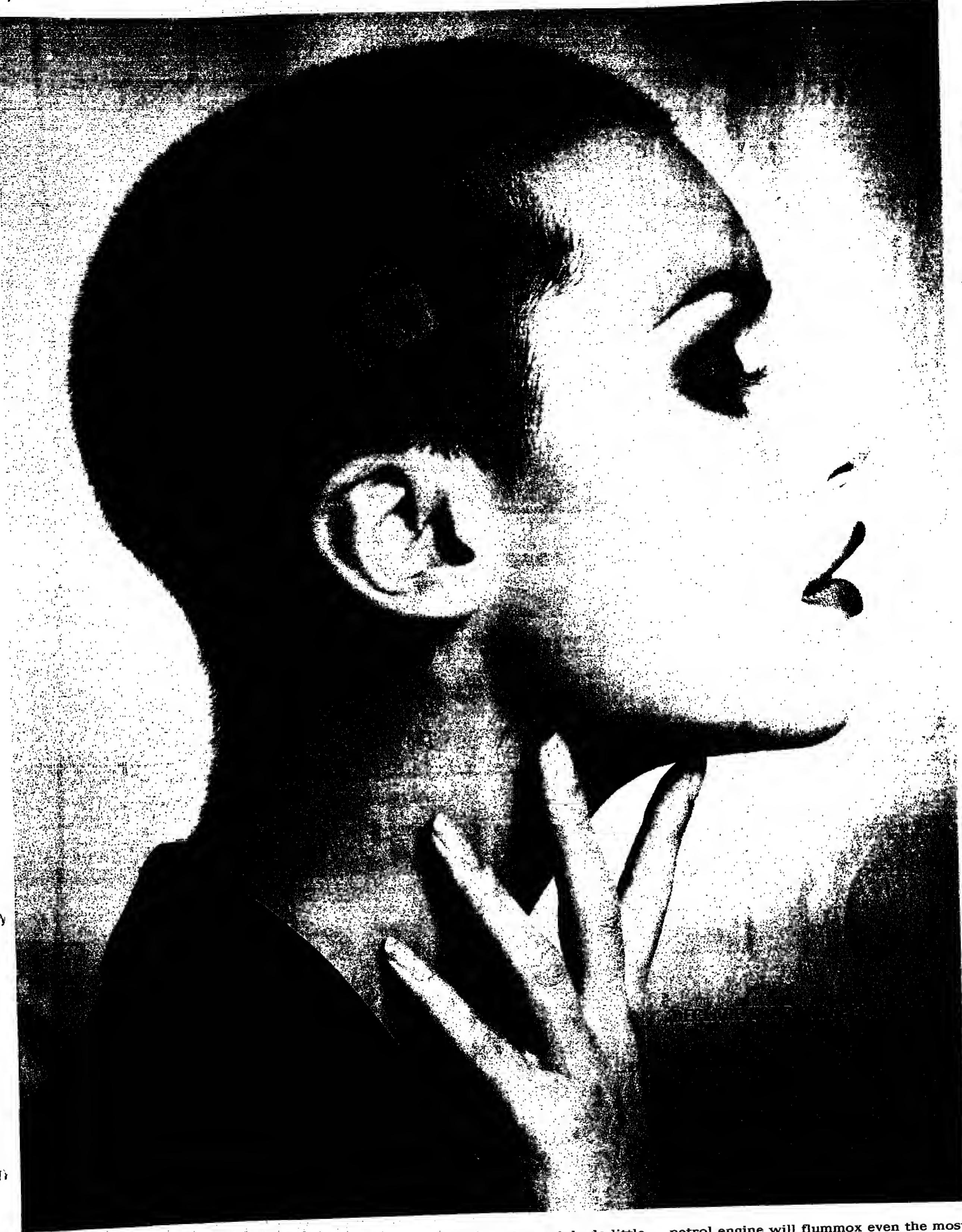
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# Burn in Auschwitz, Jews tell Jews



**Arm of the law:** A heated confrontation between a policeman and a Reform Jew who was among a group prevented from praying at Jerusalem's Western Wall because they had brought women with them - something forbidden to Orthodox adherents.

Right: Nir Liron, aged three, standing among the burnt-out remains of the Mevasseret Zion kindergarten run by Reform Jews which was deliberately set on fire recently.

Photographs: Ariel Jerozolimski



Patrick Cockburn  
Mevasseret Zion

At first, Aliza Landau hoped the fire in the kindergarten she runs on the outskirts of Jerusalem had happened by accident. "I didn't want to believe anybody would do it on purpose," she says. "Then the police showed us where they broke a window and threw in burning liquid."

Inside the gutted school, its walls blackened by smoke, Mrs Landau shows the spot where the fire reduced a dozen children's miniature plastic chairs to a puddle. The floor is wet with dirty water and ashes, while on the balconies are heaps of toys and children's paintings.

Nobody is under arrest for the attempt to burn the kindergarten in Mevasseret Zion, a town of 20,000 in a forest west of Jerusalem, but locals have little doubt who was behind it. The 41 schoolchildren and their parents are Reform Jews, a modernising tradition in Judaism, much disliked by Orthodox Jews. The arson attack is the latest incident in the increasingly violent struggle between secular and religious Jews, a battle dividing Israel almost as much as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In few places is the hostility between the two sides as deep as in Mevasseret Zion. It was first settled by poor but religious Jews from Morocco and Iraqi Kurdistan in the 1950s. But recently they have been swamped by better-off, secular Israelis, often of European origin. A new, expensive shopping mall, topped by a McDonald's restaurant, is a symbol of gentrification much disliked by older residents.

Aliza Landau had a taste of the anger of her more religious neighbours when she attended a council meeting in Mevasseret Zion in January which was to discuss giving the Reform Jews - a small minority in

Israel but numerous in the US - land on which to build a synagogue. Although Mrs Landau is a survivor of the Holocaust one of the opponents of the plan came up to her and shouted: "You are not a Jew."

Chana Sorek, chairwoman of the Reform congregation to which 120 families belong, finds it too painful to recall the insults hurled at her at the same meeting. She told a local newspaper that somebody shouted: "It's too bad they didn't burn you at Auschwitz." Another, showing how religious and class animosities combine in Mevasseret Zion, said: "You sell pork in the shopping mall. We'll burn the shopping mall and we'll burn you, too."

Even when the kindergarten was burned earlier this month, criticism was not wholly muted. Aliza Landau, the kindergarten's educational director, asked the local council to let

her use a disused school while hers was being repaired. They agreed, but she recalls that two members of Shas, a traditional religious party drawing most support from Middle East Jews, voted against.

Chana Sorek says she has had little contact with the original residents of Mevasseret Zion, but adds: "Some of them are not only religious but have criminal records." But the local construction workers repairing the kindergarten have no doubt about the protagonists in the dispute. As Aliza Landau showed us the damage to the school one of the workers shouted out jovially: "Shas told us not to allow in any journalists."

The ferocity of the conflict in Mevasseret Zion is not unprecedented. The Orthodox Jewish establishment uses extraordinarily vituperative language when speaking of secular Jews, or of those belonging to the Reform or Conservative traditions. This month, Yisrael Lau, the Chief Rabbi of the Ashkenazi Jews of European origin, compared Reform Jews to the suicide bombers of Islamic Jihad. The threatening rhetoric is taken seriously because it resembles rabbinical denunciations of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli prime minister assassinated in 1995.

Professor Shlomo Hasson, a specialist on conflict between the secular and religious at the Florschtein Institute for Policy Studies in Jerusalem, sees the incidents in Mevasseret Zion as "part of a wider battle for Jerusalem".

A poll he conducted shows 40 per cent of secular Jews in Jerusalem want to leave the city. The reason most often given is bad relations with the ultra-Orthodox. He says: "Many of them moved to Mevasseret Zion

which they thought was a secular stronghold, but also contains traditional Jews who came in the Fifties."

An alliance of ultra-Orthodox and right-wing traditional Jews, often of Middle Eastern origin, has controlled Jerusalem's local government since 1993. A sign of their strength was shown earlier this month when a small group of men and women from Reform and Conservative synagogues tried to pray together - something forbidden to Orthodox Jews - near the Western Wall. They were dragged away, kicking and screaming, by the police.

The melting pot has never quite worked in Israel. The very strident of Israeli nationalism, in part, is an attempt to bridge the divisions. Different communities dress, worship, vote and behave differently. In Mevasseret Zion, says Professor Hasson, "ethnic and religious differences come together in a dangerous cocktail".

Only recently 1,000 police drove out more than 100 squatters from the old Moroccan and Kurdish communities in the town who were homeless and who had occupied houses used by the government to temporarily accommodate new Jewish immigrants. This week 10 of these homeless families asked for asylum from Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority in Jericho. Some carried banners saying: "Mevasseret, life or death".

For many secular Jews there is an obvious link between the motives which led to the smouldering kindergarten in Mevasseret Zion and those of Yigal Amir, the religious nationalist student who assassinated Mr Rabin. Israel is a profoundly religious country and in any conflict, national or religious, it does not take much for those involved to believe they are not only in the right but are the chosen instrument of God.

## Hard decisions needed in Mid-East, says Albright

Patrick Cockburn  
Jerusalem

Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, said she had been unable to make significant progress during her three-day visit to Israel and Jordan will return only when leaders "have made hard decisions". Israeli and Palestinian delegations are to meet in Washington and New York later in the month for talks, but Mrs Albright said: "I wished this trip had produced larger steps, because they are needed."

During the first half of her visit, Mrs Albright pleased Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, by focussing on the need for Yasser Arafat, the

Palestinian leader, to guarantee Israel's security by arresting members of Hamas, the Islamic militant organisation.

But Mrs Albright then surprised the Israeli government by saying that "Israel should refrain from unilateral acts, including what Palestinians perceive as the provocative expansion of settlements, land confiscation, home

demolitions and confiscation of IDs". The American demand was swiftly rejected. David Bar-Ilan, Mr Netanyahu's aide, said: "We cannot freeze settlements any more than we can freeze life."

Just how easily the diplomatic vacuum can be filled by events on the ground was shown on the last day of Mrs Albright's visit, when the military wing of

Hamas accused Israel of kidnapping one of its leaders in the Palestinian enclave of Gaza, and threatened to retaliate with attacks on Israel. A fax from the Izzedine el-Qassam brigades sent to news agencies says: "Israeli intelligence... kidnapped late at night the hero Dr Ibrahim al-Maqadimeh."

This was strenuously denied by Israel. Shai Bazak, the Prime Minister's spokesman, said: "You can say unequivocally that Israel did not kidnap Maqadimeh."

A kidnapping by Israel in a Palestinian-controlled area would also end any chance of Mr Arafat moving against Hamas. Despite her public stance, Mrs Albright is said by US officials to accept that Mr Arafat cannot move systematically against the militants unless Israel improves the political climate. In practice, this would mean curtailing Jewish settlements on the West Bank, the release of prisoners and further troop withdrawals.

Mrs Albright flew to Syria yesterday to meet President Hafez al-Assad, but progress in talks between Israel and Syria looks unlikely since Mr Netanyahu says he will not return the Golan Heights, which were captured by Israel in 1967. He may, however, wish to show flexibility with Syria in order to divert American attention from the crisis in his relations with the Palestinians.

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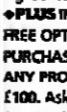
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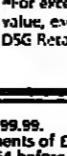
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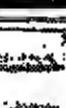
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# Bosnia's elections set to shake the Balkans

Andrew Gumbel

Banja Luka

Most voters don't seem to know it yet, and even the international community has its doubts, but this weekend's municipal elections in Bosnia may just trigger a geopolitical earthquake to shake the insidious certainties of nationalism and "ethnic cleansing" inherited from four years of war.

At first sight, the elections look like just another confirmation of the ethnic freeze that has existed since the ceasefire two years ago.

Serbs, Croats and Muslims all now live separately—in some instances glowering at each other across the street in the same town, but still living apart—and nobody has shown much inclination either to return home or to welcome back refugees from the "wrong" ethnic group.

But these elections carry a secret weapon. This is the power given to voters to cast their ballot in absentia in the towns and villages where they lived in 1991, before the war started.

In other words, a Muslim from Srebrenica now living as a refugee in Sarajevo has the right to vote in Srebrenica—but without needing to run the risk of actually going there on election day.

Similarly, parties are putting up candidates in areas where it is too dangerous for them to campaign but where they can count on the support of hundreds or thousands of refugees of their own ethnic group who want to influence the outcome in their old home towns.

The results could be spectacular, particularly since

unofficial estimates put the number of absentees voters as high as 40 per cent.

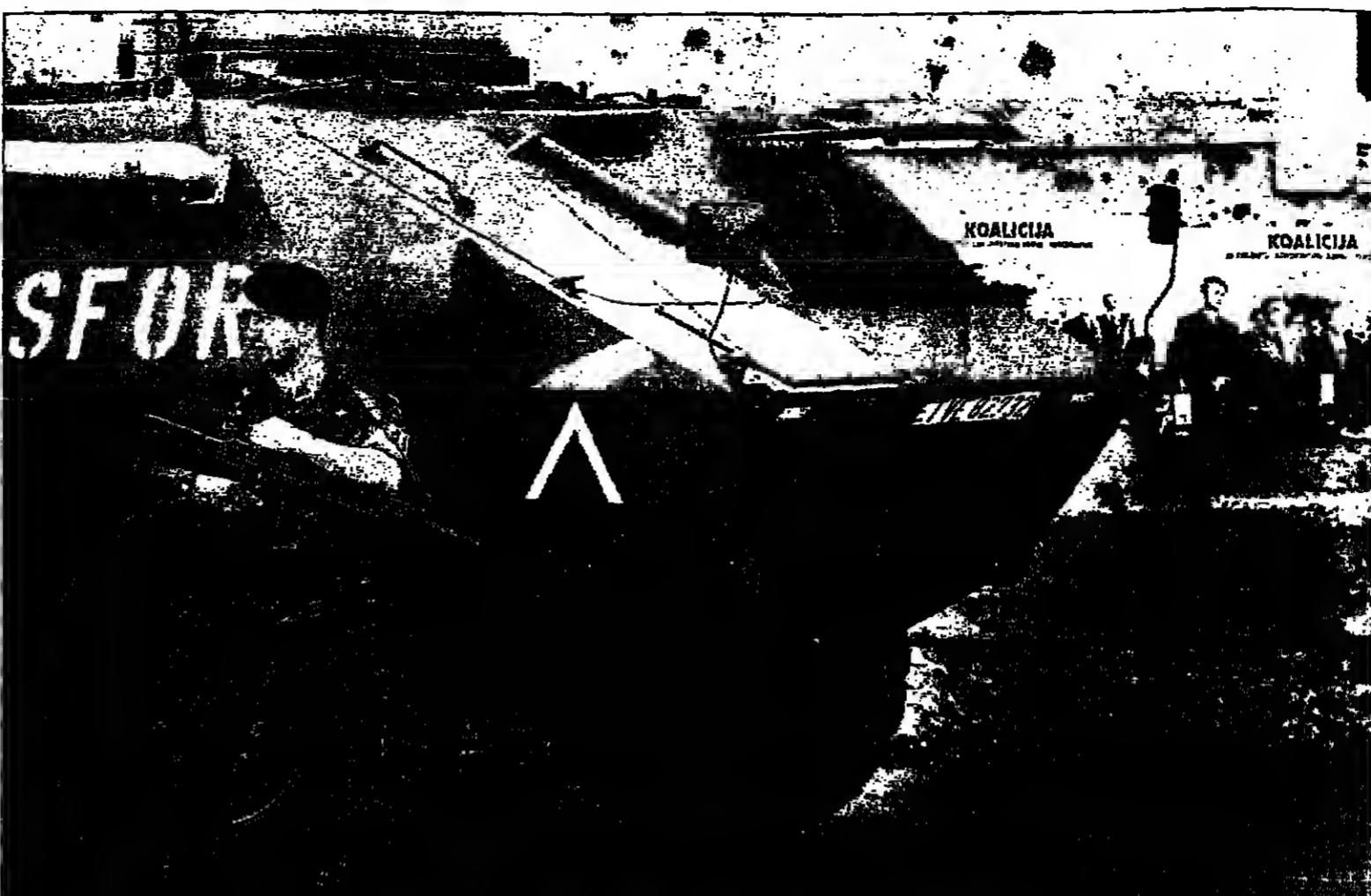
A town that is now purely Serb, such as Visegrad, might suddenly find itself with a Muslim town council; a former Serb stronghold such as Drvar in western Bosnia, which is now exclusively Croat, might find that the Serbs are in charge again, albeit from a distance.

These are explosive scenarios, and not necessarily ones that will end happily. The risks are enormous, but so are the possible rewards. "This is the last chance for the international community to prove the Dayton Accords can be put into action," said one Western official. "Failure will mean permanent dismemberment of a European country along ethnic lines. Success won't lead to reintegration, but at least it will bring back some normality."

Originally, the municipal elections were supposed to have taken place last September alongside parliamentary and presidential elections for the different levels of Bosnia's complex government. They were cancelled because political conditions were not right.

Since refugees at that time were entitled to nominate any new place of residence, the main nationalist parties tried to use the elections as a means of further ethnic engineering—massing their supporters in strategic towns that they yearned to wrest back from one of the other factions.

This year the rules have changed, and voters have to choose either the place where they lived in 1991, or the place where they have been resident



Keeping the peace: An SFOR soldier in front of election posters in Mostar, which is split between Muslims and Croats

Photograph: AP

## Voters tested by a bewildering array of parties

Since June 1996, The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) has been ruthless in checking registration lists for both candidates and voters, and in some cases has struck candidates out of the election as punishment for attempted irregularities.

There is sure to be stiff resistance to any Muslim victory in a Serb-held area, for example. But the international community hopes to pressure the two sides into accepting one another through a rigorous poll of sanctions.

"If municipality A refuses to let the winning candidate enter its territory, it will be cut off from all international aid. That may not make much of an impression at first, but over time, as people see that municipality B down the road is beginning to prosper because it has a policy of co-operation, things may change," said Fahio Geragot, OSCE spokesman in Banja Luka.

"Economic well-being is key to the change in this country."

If things go wrong, the elections could lead to a heightening of tension in key flashpoints and an entrenchment of aggression among the three groups.

Some municipality boundaries are still in dispute, notably along the internal divide be-

Serb Democratic Alliance and the Serb Democratic Party of Displaced Persons? Or between the Citizens' Party, the People's Party, the Worker's Party and the New Workers' Party? It sounds like a Balkan rewrite of *The Life of Brian*.

It does not help that most parties have little or no media profile. One independent magazine based in Banja Luka, *Reporter*, has valiantly tried to compile information on the parties to help the voters.

Not all the parties have wanted to "advertise" their programmes or even their leaders' names. Some of the information that has been provided is downright bizarre.

There is a Serbian Worker's Party that supports the return of the monarchy, and any number of nationalist parties that support, at least in principle, the implementation of the Dayton peace accords.

As for the New Communist Party, it has its basic aims as "socialism, human rights and the Dayton Agreement, Marxism and Leninism". Asked how it expects to do in the elections, it answered: "Average". What on earth is "average" in a crazy place like postwar Bosnia?

Andrew Gumbel

lims. The outcome of the election could, in a worst-case scenario, result in one or other of the populations being driven out.

Drvar will also be interesting since bushloads of Serb refugees will be arriving over the weekend, not just to vote but also to make their presence keenly felt in their former home.

In June, a number of Serb homes were burned in Drvar just as former inhabitants were putting together a request to be allowed back.

Overall, the performance of the main nationalist parties will be crucial. Last year, they dominated everything, but this year they are under pressure both from their own internal disputes—as in Serb Bosnia, for example—and also from a profusion of smaller parties that have emerged.

A sign of the main parties' nervousness is that two of them, the Croats and the Pale Serbs, threatened to boycott the poll altogether. But yesterday, under intense international pressure, both agreed to take part.

Mombasa (Reuters)—At least eight people were killed yesterday when Kenyan police launched a huge operation, involving 200 officers, to flush out a group of gunmen terrorising residents in the Ukunda area south of the port city of Mombasa, police said.

Local police chief Japheth Mwania said that six of the dead were gunmen suspected of being members of a 100-strong group that attacked Ukunda on Thursday. The two others were civilian bystanders caught in crossfire, he said.

Mwania, recently assigned to Mombasa to deal with the violence there, said a one-year-old child was missing after its mother was attacked on Thursday night.

One person died and two were wounded, and witnesses said the attackers razed 100 houses and 70 buildings.

Mwania said police had recovered two stolen police firearms.

Last Friday up to five people, including a two-year-old child, were hacked to death and 20 seriously wounded by heavily armed raiders in Mombasa's Likoni suburb.

Areas around Mombasa have suffered a wave of violence since August in which more than 40 people have been killed.

Tens of thousands of people have fled since President Daniel arap Moi, 73, ordered a police crackdown on violence.

Moi, who has been in power for 19 years, accuses the opposition of fueling tribal tensions before a general election this year. But many "upcountry" people leaving the coast say the government wants them out because they would vote for the opposition.

On Thursday, Kenya's parliament formally adopted constitutional reforms intended to avoid bloodshed ahead of the elections.

They provide for the repeal of laws which allow detention without trial and approve the expansion of Kenya's electoral commission to bring in members nominated by the opposition.

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Photograph: AP

## Calypso for calamity island

**Phil Davison**  
Gerald's Bottom, Montserrat

"On the map you can hardly find it, but it's always my paradise and everyone who has seen it has always been hypnotised. But beneath the green and the mountains a volcano has been sleeping, and now he is awakinin', I don't know what to do."

On some maps, Montserrat is not even marked. But an angry volcano has thrust it to the world stage, turning it from a hypnotic Caribbean paradise into an island of struggling hut refugees.

The lyrics above, sung by the local Montserratian soca-calypso star known only as Arrow, will electrify the Royal Albert Hall on Monday. Following moving video images of the devastated island, Arrow will launch into his second best-known song, *An Just Can't Run Away*.

It tells why he and thousands of other islanders are refusing to leave despite two years of an erupting volcano which last month wiped out the island's capital, Plymouth.

In case anybody gets too morbid, he will also sing his biggest worldwide hit, *(Feelin') Hot, Hot, Hot*, a soca-calypso number he partly recorded in Sir George Martin's Air Studio on the volcano island. The studio is now ash-covered and abandoned in the volcanic flow danger zone.

At the same time that people are watching the Music for Montserrat



concert in London, Montserratian and other Caribbean singers and groups, topped by former members of the Climax Blues Band, will hold a parallel concert here, right alongside a tent camp for refugees from volcano-affected zones.

The free concert, aimed at lifting the spirits of the islanders, has the blessing of Sir George Martin – the Beatles producer and organiser of the London concert because of his love for Montserrat – and the British Foreign Office.

The Climax Blues Band were the first artists to record at the Air Studio,

graced later by the Police, Dire Straits, Paul McCartney, Mick Jagger and countless others. Climax's keyboard

player, Peter Filleul, is helping organise the bash in the village of Gerald's Bottom. It is the butt of many jokes – "live from Gerald's Bottom" – but the village is so named because it is on a piece of land that bottoms out at the foot of its island's Centre Hills.

The local concert will be small compared with London. There are probably little more than 4,000 islanders still left. The organisers are being careful not to upset anyone by bringing in too much equipment on already-overloaded ferries. They have told the performers to expect no luxuries. "No limousines or luxury hotels on this trip. More of an expedition," said Filleul. But it is being seen as a highly-

symbolic event, aimed at cheering up the weary islanders, who have been breathing in volcanic ash even between eruptions, and signalling that normal life can still go on to Montserrat.

The concert is being called *Many Happy Returns*, not a reference to anyone's birthday but to all islanders' hopes – 7,000 have left over the past two years – that they will one day return.

Alongside Caribbean bands such as the Burning Flames from Antigua and Bankie Banx from Anguilla, local calypso singer the Mighty Ash will sing his popular tune *Run to the North*, referring to the fact that the islanders have had to flee to the safer northern zone as the volcano, to the south,

erupted. "When the mountain crash, and you see the ash, just jam, jam, jam to the North," it goes.

"Listened to the scientist, listen to the latest, and hear what they have to say, and when they say to run, and you havin' fun, just prance, prance, prince to the North."

Gerald's Bottom is in the heart of the northern "safe zone", about six miles from the volcano as the crow flies, and thought to be out of reach of its deadly pyroclastic flow of red hot ash, gas and rock.

Those attending the Albert Hall may be focused more on Eric Clapton, Sting or McCartney but Arrow's lilting song, *Ah Just Can't Run Away*, written after his island's Soufrière Hills volcano first erupted in 1995, is likely to be the touching highlight of the concert.

The celebrated singer – real name Alphonsus Cassell and a shopkeeper in Montserrat in between his concerts – will launch into the number after an emotional video film showing the Mootserrat capital, Plymouth, before and after it was devastated a month ago.

Arrow has spearheaded the sentiment that Montserratians should not take up British suggestions that they leave.

Backing it up with deeds, he is concluding a new shop in the north to replace his supermarket in Plymouth, now covered in ash, and one still operating in the possible danger zone at Salem.

## Jiang extols virtues of downsizing

**Teresa Poole**  
Peking

President Jiang Zemin stuck his political neck out yesterday with bold plans to overhaul China's ailing state sector, cut the army by 500,000 soldiers and launch a "protracted war" against corruption.

In the most important speech of his political career, Mr Jiang, 71, became the first Chinese Communist leader to call on factories to increase efficiency by downsizing staff, part of an ambitious economic reform programme for loss-making state enterprises which is economically necessary but which carries social risks.

Standing beneath a huge hammer-and-sickle emblem in the Great Hall of the People, Mr Jiang opened the 15th party congress by nailing his political colours to the reformist mast of Deng Xiaoping. This is the first congress since the architect of China's modernisation died in February, and Mr Jiang

### Capitalist revolution – in the President's own words

**On job losses:** "Fundamentally speaking, it is conducive to economic development, thus conforming to the long-term interests of the working class."

**On political theory:** "Marxism will necessarily advance along with the development of the times, politics and economy; it must remain unrigid."

**On losing flexibilities:** "The shareholding system... can be used both under capitalism and socialism..."

**On losing control of industry:** "Even if the state-owned sector accounts for a smaller proportion of the economy, this will not affect the Socialist nature of our country."

**To the West:** "We do not impose our social system and ideology upon others, nor will we allow other countries to force theirs upon us."

**On stealing:** "The fight against corruption is a grave

political struggle vital to the very existence of the Communist Party and the state."

**On the media:** "We should tighten control over the press and publishing."

**On Chinese culture:** "We must resolutely resist the corrosion of decadent ideas and cultures."

**To Taiwan:** "We shall work for peaceful reunification, but we shall not undertake to renounce the use of force."

**On foreign relations:** "It is still serious that human rights and other issues are used to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries."

**On the future:** "By the middle of the next century... China will have become a prosperous, strong, democratic and culturally advanced socialist country."

Teresa Poole

"We cannot say in general terms that the shareholding system is public or private, for the key lies in who holds the controlling share," said Mr Jiang.

But the main danger, as Mr Jiang knows, comes from the millions of jobs which will be placed at risk when market forces are unleashed on state firms, half of which were in the red last year. The President admitted: "It would be hard to avoid the flow of lay-offs. It will cause temporary difficulties to [some] of the workers."

Reform of state enterprises has been under way for several years, albeit without an official imprimatur. Workers' strikes and public protests over redundancies and unpaid wages have already threatened some in north-east and inland cities.

Mr Jiang's decision to cut 500,000 of China's 3 million soldiers over the next three years will add to the employment problem. This follows a reduction in troop levels of 1 million during the

Eighties. Mr Jiang yesterday called on the army to "uphold the absolute leadership by the Party" but in reality he desperately needs to retain the support of the military to bolster his position as supreme leader and it is not clear how the generals will feel about the latest cuts.

Mr Jiang has also put himself in dangerous territory by delivering a broadside against corruption in the party. "We should be mentally prepared to fight a protracted war against corruption," he said.

Everyone paid lip service to a crackdown on corruption in China but so many people have their fingers in the pot that a real top-level onslaught could cause a serious political upset. Earlier this week it was announced that the disgraced former party secretary of Peking, Chen Xitong, had been expelled from the party and would be prosecuted.

Ordinary Chinese welcomed the move, but it sent ripples of disquiet through the party's upper echelons.

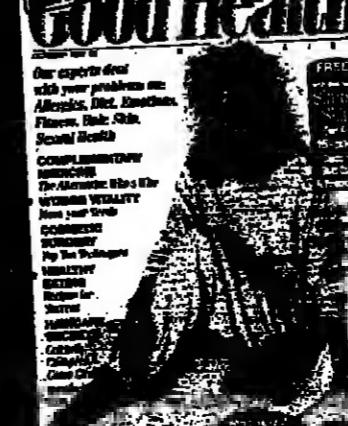
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ISSUE ONE  
OUT NOW

# EU hunts for a tax system to save jobs

Katherine Butler  
Luxembourg

European Union governments will today be asked to take the first highly controversial steps towards the harmonisation of direct taxation.

Finance ministers meeting in Luxembourg will be urged to sign up to plans to collaborate on company taxation to avert a damaging slide towards tax "competition" between member states after the launch of a single European currency in 1999.

More than a third of EU unemployment, running at 18 million, is directly traceable, EU officials now believe, to the shift in the burden of taxation away from capital to labour. That shift has been provoked by aggressive competition between member states to seduce multinational investors with corporate tax perks and incentives.

The growing consensus in Brussels is that divergent tax systems and rates among the member states will destroy even more jobs after the launch of the single currency.

No longer subject to exchange risks and transaction costs within the EU, capital will become even more mobile, so tax will become the big deciding factor for companies selecting investment locations. But the most worrying trend is for governments to compensate for lost revenue on company taxation by heaping costs on labour, with obvious consequences for jobs.

According to the Commission, as much as 4 per cent of EU unemployment can be blamed on the shift in the burden of taxation from capital to employment over the past 15 years. Taxation on wage-earning labour has risen from 35 per cent to more than 42 per cent but, for capital, has fallen from 45 per cent to below 35 per cent on average over this period.

There is growing alarm at the extent to which bosses of multinationals can avoid income tax by exploiting different tax residency laws in the EU, while low-skilled workers in small companies, whom Brussels calls the "fiscally immobile", bear the

Finance ministers urged to call a ceasefire in battle to attract investment by the multinationals

brunt of direct taxation. For this reason the Commission's plan will introduce the notion of a European fiscal "citizenship" to suppress differences between tax residency and non-residency.

Mario Monti, the EU Commissioner for taxation policy plan, warned yesterday of a "potential explosion of political conflict between the member states" unless action is taken.

Britain, which strenuously opposes ceding the national veto over taxation and any moves to harmonise tax within the EU, will greet the proposals with extreme apprehension.

Reflecting the political sensitivity that surrounds direct taxation, Mr Monti's proposals at this stage are for a tax "code of conduct" whereby member states would agree to a moratorium on company tax perks used by some governments to poach jobs and multinational investment from their neighbours.

The code would be "non-binding" but would be given teeth by a system of "peer review" whereby other governments could judge if a country's tax rates were harmful to the EU as a whole. The move will arouse suspicion that Brussels is unveiling the thin end of a wedge leading progressively to a single tax authority and, ultimately, the harmonisation of national taxation.

Mr Monti, whose proposals are the culmination of months of study with national tax advisers, said his initial priority was to achieve a standstill on corporation tax perks but admitted there were growing demands for a minimum rate or a common "floor" on corporation tax.

He said it would not be realistic to expect immediate agreement on a minimum company tax rate common to all member states. To be consistent, this would imply full harmonisation of the tax base, but, outgoing this even co-ordination

companies across the border. Luxembourg, which holds the EU presidency, is also a target by virtue of its refusal to levy a withholding tax on savings, a ploy to attract foreign investors. Germany estimates that it is losing about £7bn a year in potential revenue to Luxembourg.

Luxembourg's Premier, Jean Claude Juncker, who is also the country's finance minister, is now prepared to discuss a withholding tax provided colleagues agree to a wider package of tax-coordinating measures.

In the meantime, he said, the first step would be to abolish or phase out special tax regimes used, for example, by Ireland to secure 14 per cent of all new investment in the EU last year.

The Netherlands and Belgium have also come under fire from Bonn for offering special tax deals to tempt big German

would have been unthinkable some years ago, he said. "Perhaps one day that will be the outcome." He predicted that the integration of markets and institutions which would follow the single currency would make it easier to aim for "a much higher degree of tax homogeneity within the EU".

A spokesman for the Treasury said Britain's overriding concern at today's talks would be to ensure that direct taxation remains a matter for national sovereignty.

"Clearly it is right that harmful tax competition should be addressed but any code must be voluntary and non-binding," the spokesman said.



Anger behind the veil: Women of the Jaamat-i-Islami fundamentalist party in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, where 200 women in Muzaffarabad protested against outrages by Indian-held Kashmir

Photograph: AFP

## significant shorts

### Chrétien in plea to US over landmines ban

Jean Chrétien, has made a special pitch to President Bill Clinton to drop US objections to an international ban on landmines, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Prime Minister said yesterday.

Mr Chrétien telephoned Mr Clinton on Thursday to stress that the coming week is the last chance to make changes in the proposed treaty being hammered out in Oslo. From next Friday, countries will only be able to approve it or reject it but not change its wording. "He definitely doesn't want Clinton to let the opportunity pass," a Canadian spokeswoman said. "Time is pressing and it has come to an urgent point."

Reuters - Ottawa

### Australia to hold monarchy talks

Australians will hold a constitutional convention in February to decide whether the nation should become a republic and dump the British monarch as head of state, the government said. Prime Minister John Howard announced the constitutional convention will be held at Old Parliament House in Canberra from 2-6 February and 9-13 February. Half of the 152 delegates will be elected by postal ballot, half appointed by the conservative government.

AP - Sydney

### Le Pen forced to flee mob fury

National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (centre) and city mayor Catherine Meurat (left) running for cover in the NF's southern French stronghold of Vitrolles yesterday after coming under attack from egg-throwing demonstrators opposed to the party's far-right policies.

### Anniversary tribute for Biko

President Nelson Mandela laid a wreath yesterday at the grave of Steve Biko, honouring the martyr of South Africa's black liberation struggle on the 20th anniversary of his death. The wreath-laying in the Eastern Cape province started a day of commemoration, including the scheduled unveiling of a statue on a street corner in the centre of East London.

Reuters - East London

### Tudjman seeks place in history

The childhood home of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's is being renovated and will open as a memorial next month to what observers see as a further sign of his desire to emulate Communist Yugoslavia's founder, Josip Broz Tito. The small, tumbledown one-floor dwelling is in Veliko Trgovišće, 12 miles north-west of the Croatian capital Zagreb.

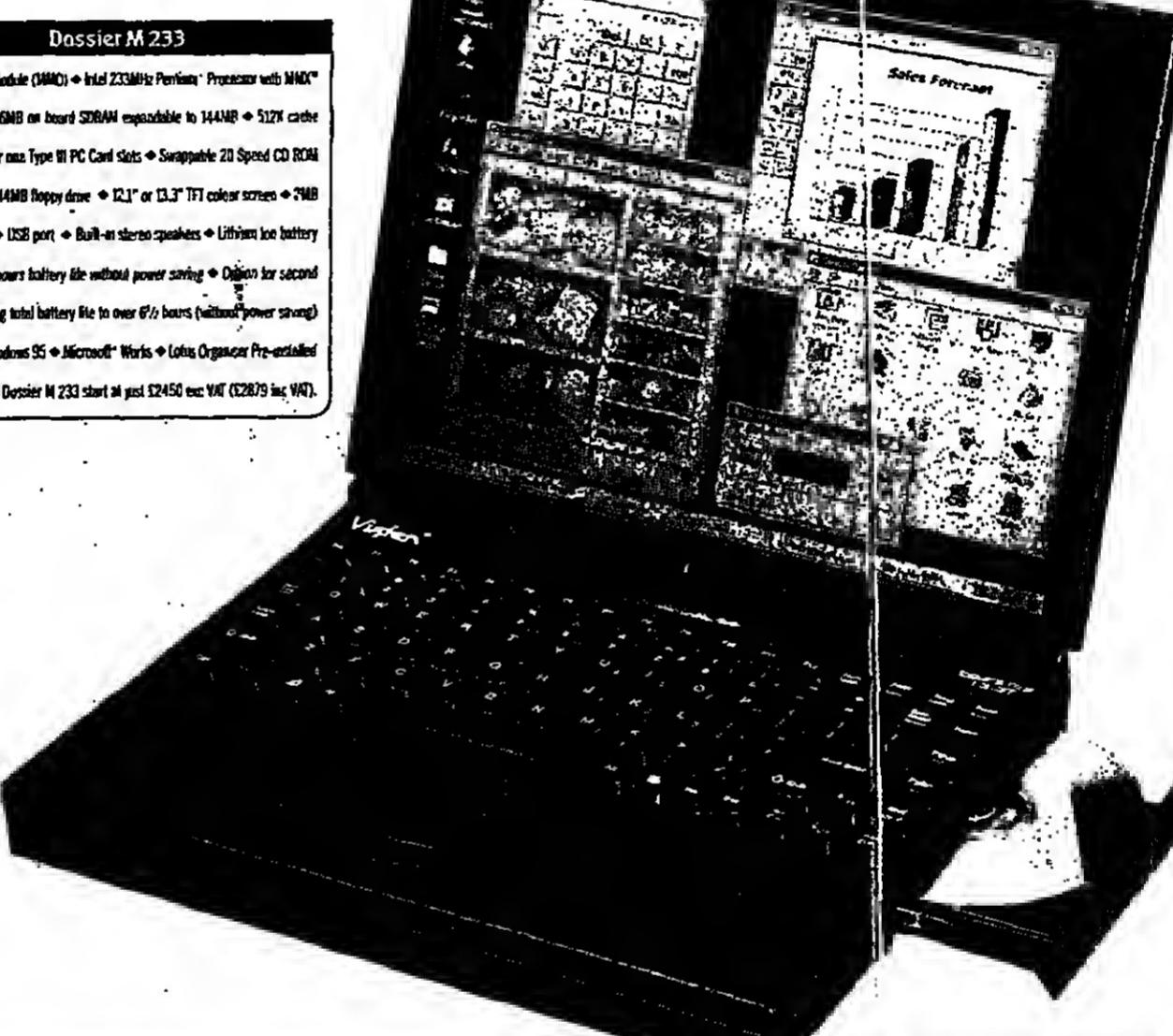
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## obituaries / gazette

# Janet Leach

Janet Leach was a major post-war potter who, although married to Bernard Leach, the most important and influential studio potter of the 20th century, only accepted in part his ideas about what made a good pot, and instead developed her own highly distinctive style, combining throwing on the potter's wheel with hand building.

Despite her commitment to the Leach Pottery at St Ives, in Cornwall, she succeeded in establishing her own international reputation in the 1970s and 1980s for ceramics which were quite different in mood and appearance to those of her more famous husband. Powerful and often monumental, her pots reflect the strength and determination of her character.

Like many artists who work with clay, Janet Leach did not come into contact with the material until she was in her early thirties. She was born Janet Darnell, in Grand Saline, a small town in Texas. In 1918, an only child of parents whose families had travelled to Texas by horse and wagon.

From early on she showed an aptitude for art, especially sculpture, though, given the economic depression of the time, there was little money to fund her studies. In the absence of any better materials she used to whittle wood and sandstone with the Swiss army knives which her grandfather, a policeman, picked up from the criminals he arrested. For a short period she went to a small art school in Dallas, drawing local prostitutes, who were only too pleased to pose. For a time she helped create dioramas depicting aspects of Texan history, but she saved assiduously to enable her to move to New York and begin a career as a sculptor.

With a friend, Janet travelled to New York by Greyhound bus, arriving with an accent so broad she felt almost as much a foreigner in the city as she was to live later in Japan. She worked as an unpaid assistant to the sculptor Robert Crookshank before becoming involved in the Federal Works Art Project. The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 brought this to an end, and although she was briefly married to Joe Turino, an Italian shipyard worker, they had little in common, and she refused to have children, to delay his entry into the forces.

Politically aware, involved in Communism and strongly anti-Fascist, like many others she had been shocked by the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939. When the United States entered the Second World War, she was planning a lecture tour with the Japanese potter Shoji Hamada and the writer Soetsu Yanagi promised contact with people who understood pottery and its relevance in life, and her meeting with them proved to be a major turning-point.

At Black Mountain College, North Carolina, while she was expecting to be inspired by Leach, it was Hamada who held her attention. Seeing him sitting cross-legged on a table making pots while someone else turned the wheel, she knew exactly what was wrong with her own work. "He used to play pat-a-cake with the pots, pushing



Bottle by Leach, c.1970  
Photograph: Peter Kinnear

them around. I had never seen anything like it. I knew I was treating the wheel like a lathe, we were too mechanical," she said. She decided to ask to study with him in Japan. She had struck up a friendship with Bernard Leach, and he helped gain Hamada's consent. Travelling by cargo boat, she arrived in Japan in 1954.

For a time she stayed at Hamada's pottery at Mashiko, despite the strong local convention that women should not work as potters or travel around the country unaccompanied. Inevitably, the language was also a problem, as she assumed, wrongly, that Hamada spoke no English, although he had lived in St Ives for two years. He advised her not to learn from him but from where he learnt, and suggested she work at the Ichino family pottery in Tambo where they still made pots in the traditional style.

Here she watched and learned to work on a Japanese wheel and to appreciate the natural qualities of clay and firing. With Bernard Leach she travelled around the country, typing out his manuscript for *A Potter in Japan* (published in 1960). Their friendship deepened, and they agreed to marry on the understanding that he would leave his pottery at St Ives in the hands of his eldest son David while they would settle in Japan.

Marrying a man over 30 years her senior, and with an international reputation as a potter and artist was fraught with problems, some of which immediately became manifest. David Leach had for some time been feeling the need to break away from his father's influence and set up his own pottery, and, with the impending marriage, took the opportunity to announce his move. With no one to run the Leach Pottery, which produced a steady income, their plan to settle in Japan had to be

abandoned, and in early 1956 Janet arrived in England.

There she discovered that she was expected to manage the pottery without having had any experience of a production workshop, organise a team of around dozen workers, develop new markets and help design new shapes. As a foreigner she was viewed with much suspicion but succeeded in holding the pottery together and, while her manner could be intimidating, it was clear to everyone that she cared for the pots and the potters who made them.

Janet eventually set up her own private studio complete with a Japanese wheel and built an experimental kiln to fire pots surrounded by the actual flame. Given her independence and intention of making pots quite distinct from those of Bernard, it is surprising that Janet took the family name. Any hesitation in bearing the Leach name was put aside under pressure from Bernard, and, not wanting a confrontation with him on the issue, she eventually agreed.

The marriage was never an easy one. Janet was not a Leach worshipper, she did not seek Bernard's advice, was sometimes openly critical of his pots, and she did not share his increasingly important Bahai faith. However, they both loved Japan and enjoyed their frequent visits. In 1962 Bernard moved to his own flat, leaving Janet to run the pottery. When he died in 1979, production of Leach standard ware ended, and Janet shared the pottery with Trevor Corser, an apprentice, until her death.

"Jane's pots show no direct influence from mine," wrote Bernard, admiring her independence yet bewailing her interest in "irregular forms and textures". Janet was careful to avoid dogmatism, claiming that "the good pot is not one kind of pot, but many. I am quite satisfied with the pursuit of that good pot."



'The good pot is not one kind of pot, but many': Leach in c1955

mistakable voice, combining both austerity and sensuality.

Exhibitions in London at major venues such as the British Crafts Centre, Craft Potters Shop and private galleries were complimented by 10 important one-person shows in Japan. A retrospective is long overdue.

Emmanuel Cooper

*Janet Darnell, potter; born Grand Saline, Texas 15 March 1918; married first Joe Turino (marriage dissolved), secondly*

1955

*Bernard Leach (died 1979); died St Ives, Cornwall 12 September 1997.*

## General Sir John Hackett

Shan Hackett was indeed a great soldier, an able administrator and a thorough and lucid scholar, writes Nicolas Barker [further to the obituary by Max Arthur, 10 September]. So have others been, though few all three. But he had two unique gifts: the imagination to see, in things and people, potential that no one else could see; and a generous irreducible enthusiasm to realise that potential, to get things done, that transcended expectation, convention, even possibility.

No one else would have seen in Vladimir Peniakoff, an irritable Russian émigré who relieved the tedium of life in pre-war Alexandria by long journeys into the desert, a genius for demoralising an overstretched enemy out of all proportion to the tiny force he led, or christened the force "Popski's Private Army" after the tiny little comic in the strip cartoon. Like Denys Hamilton's *We Fell Among Greeks* (1946), Peniakoff's *Popski's Private Army* (1950) was one of the first books to tell the story of the war as it really was, and it paid generous tribute to Hackett, his ability and freedom from convention.

If he was a great soldier in victory, he was still greater in defeat. He was one of the first to realise the strategic folly of Arnhem, but he made the most of his brigade, even when it was down to 500 men defending a 2,000-yard front. How he convalesced from his wounds and escaped to rejoin the British army just north of Breda four months later was told in *I Was a Stranger*. He wrote the story of his adventures in 1945 while it was still fresh in his mind, but he did not finish it until 1950, and even then put off publishing it until 1977.

The reasons for this are clear. It was only superficially an adventure story; it was really a spiritual odyssey, one that had deeply moved him and which he told in deeply moving terms.

The real hero is not the writer, but the Dutch people who sheltered and befriended him, often at fearful risk and at a time of universal privation. He, as much as they, was sustained by a faith that is a recurring theme in the book. The absence of heroes meant that it never attained the fame of *The Third World War*, but it will always be remembered as something more than a piece of war history.

In peace he was at home in the university as the Army, but many other things engaged him, to all of which he brought the same energy and gusto. He enjoyed writing, for which he had a natural gift, and the success of his books, which started his modesty. But I vividly remember his equal enthusiasm for an ultimately abortive encyclopaedia of military history in which we were involved.

He applied himself to many good causes. From February 1969 to his death he was a trustee of the Esme Fairbairn Trust; over 25 years he took an active interest in all the different applications, social and cultural, that came to the trust, and many of them benefited, directly or indirectly, from his wisdom, as well as the trust's funds, which he saw grow substantially.

He was always the best of company, no room but lighted up when he came into it. His sense of humour was never far away; if his wit was sometimes wicked, it was always irresistibly funny, and oö sensible person ever took offence at it. All in all, he did a power of good in all sorts of ways to all sorts of people.

## Ernest Frizelle



Frizelle: 'You'll recover from everything, except the last thing'

Up to the Second World War anaesthetics were fairly primitive, using only chloroform or ether, as muscle relaxant techniques were yet to evolve. Ernest Frizelle's professional life spanned such critical developments in surgery. The whole of his career was spent in general surgery, whereas specialising is the norm today.

A man of outstanding brilliance in his selection of patients and in his sheer dexterity, Frizelle would none the less take his fair share of tonsillectomies and other straightforward operations. He often removed 50 children's tonsils in a morning, and the children returned home by bus in the afternoon. He retired in 1965 after 40 years of surgery, and began work on the history of the Leicester Royal Infirmary, which he had first entered as a resident houseman in 1927.

Houseman jobs in Great Yarmouth, Norwich, Sheffield and Leicester were followed by his first appointment as an honorary assistant surgeon in Southport from 1929 to 1933, after which he returned to Leicester Royal Infirmary. This was then a voluntary hospital in which free treatment was given

to all. He became well known for his acumen and good judgment, which was combined with an ongoing interest in patients' wellbeing made possible by his unusual facility for remembering detail. He had a warm and gracious bedside manner.

Ernest Frizelle was the eldest of five children, born in Holywood. Co Down, in 1900, exactly 100 days before the death of Queen Victoria. He was educated at Sullivan Upper School, Queen's University, Belfast, and the Royal College of Surgeons, Edinburgh. His father was manager of the local gasworks and twice President of the Irish Association of Gas Engineers. In 1933 he married Muriel Jamie, daughter of a general practitioner in Coalville, Leicestershire.

Although he remained in England, his affection for the

Province never waned, and he kept in close touch with its affairs, assuming the Presidency of the Leicestershire Ulster Society in 1962. He visited frequently, right up to his 96th year.

In 1965 he retired as senior surgeon, and was granted the title Surgeon Emeritus to the Royal Infirmary Service in this hospital had become his life's work, and he wanted to prepare a short history for its bicentenary in 1971. It was this which later grew into the extensive and definitive *Life and Times of the Leicester Royal Infirmary: the making of a teaching hospital 1766-1990*. This took nearly 25 years of research, ran to 620 pages and weighed three kilos. To trace the growth of this provincial hospital over two centuries was to trace the social history of the whole area, a task which fitted well with Frizelle's

interdisciplinary skills. It was in recognition of this unique and authoritative work that the De Montfort University, Leicester, conferred an honorary DSc on him in 1995.

Throughout his professional life "Friz" was supremely interested in his patients, and not in medical politics. He was a godly man with a special love for the epistles of St Paul which he read and re-read as he sought to apply the Bible's authority to his professional life. This was to leave an impression on generations of younger men who were trained under his quiet influence and who looked to him for advice. The esteem and affection in which he was held was reflected in the number of doctors who entrusted their families to his care in the operating theatre. He had a winsome way and an appropriate humour, and would

quip, "You'll recover from everything, except the last thing."

"Friz" taught himself word processing at the age of 90, and would voluntarily type manuscripts for publication. He was assiduous in his accuracy and unbending in the high quality of grammar and syntax; he demanded from anything which came out of his printer. Given his own lucid thinking, his wide general knowledge, and his facility of expression, he could not resist editing as he went, for substance or for style. He continued to work on scripts until a matter of weeks before he died.

Julia Cameron

*Ernest Reginald Frizelle, surgeon and historian; born Holywood, Co Down 24 October 1900; married 1933 Muriel Jamie (died 1974; one daughter); died Leicester 29 August 1997.*

## Philippa Pullar

I knew Philippa Pullar best during the riotous stage of her life referred to in Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson's moving obituary [10 September], writes Andrew Barrow. She was enormous fun to be with, a reckless, life-enhancing force with a keen sense of her own and other people's welfare.

Sinclair-Stevenson tells only half the story about how she ended up in bed with the con-

ductor of the last bus home. She wouldn't have been on the bus at all if her car hadn't been off the road at the time, a fact which prompted her famous bon mot: "Really, my dear, it's easier days to get oneself serviced than one's car."

Philippa approached life with a playful bossiness and crusading spirit and indeed had the look about her of a medieval queen: Joan of Arc or perhaps

Eleanor of Castile, though her own exhilarating alliterative name suited her gloriously. Her imperious manner, small mock-dignified figure and flamboyant attire made her disorderly behaviour – at Lord Montagu's party she fell into the fire – even funnier.

For all her party-going abandonment, those were also years of solid achievement and there was nothing sloppy or dis-

organised about her prose-style. *Consuming Passions* is written with extraordinary verve and her biography of Frank Harris shows a remarkable ability to handle complex and deeply researched material with the lightest of touch.

Nor did her domestic life lack warmth or coherence. Her large house, off an unsurfaced road in Barnes, was a haven of wood fires, flowers, books, pictures –

a marvellous reclining nude of Philippa graced the bathroom – and of course wonderful cooking, washed down with either home-made wine or the best champagne. The house was also a comfortable home for various rabbits, rabbits and fish to whom Philippa made constant asides, and its huge wild garden stretching down to a rattling, clattering railway line, was populated by hens and a fearsome crow-

ing cock, who was sometimes fed slices of brie through the dining-room window.

When this proud bird got killed by a fox, its carcass quickly found its way into the larder and then, I daresay, into one of those delicious and pioneering dishes which Philippa would serve to a wide and exciting circle of friends which included such luminaries as Michael Holroyd, Simon Raven, Jilly

Cooper, Jennifer Paterson, Anthony Blond and the accident-prone oil heiress Olga Deterding.

The fact that she eventually grew out of these frivolities and embraced a more spiritual but less literary life is probably all to her credit, but those who knew her during those boisterous years will never forget her bright lights and lively heart.

This was his chance to kill him. But David refused:

The Lord forbid that I should on this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed... (1 Samuel xvi.6)

In Judaism the king was not only a warrior and a judge. He was also charged to have a special care for the poor and for the faith of the nation.

So Jeremiah the prophet pointedly asked his king if he thought that it was living in a rich palace which made him great.

The Christian concept of the monarch as sacred and anointed goes back to Judaism. When King Saul became jealous of David, the heir to the throne, he determined to kill him. David and his friends were hiding in the recesses of a cave when Saul came in. David stealthily cut off a piece of Saul's cloak. David's men told him that

they rejecting the hereditary principle upon which monarchy depends? Are they in effect asking for an elected president, not a monarch? Some used to argue that the very arbitrariness of the hereditary principle ensured that the monarch was God's anointed, because it removed the selection from human hands. But who still believes that today?

When Jesus went to synagogue in Nazareth he read from Isaiah:

The Spirit of the Lord... has anointed me... to bring good news to the poor... to set at liberty those who are oppressed... (Luke 4.18)

For Jesus, being anointed meant washing feet, as our monarchs did up to James II on Maundy Thursday. Can we envisage a reformed monarchy anointed not for wealth and privilege but for servanthood? Though this is a Judeo-Christian concept, it would appeal to people of other faiths and none as well. We already have hints of that concept in Prince Charles's concern for the inner city and the unemployed.

In the last few years people have swung from idealisation to anger and contempt as their idols turned out to be feet of clay. Certainly one style of monarchy seems to have run into the buffers. Instead of remaining silent and embarrassed, ought not the Church to initiate a really serious debate about the theology and meaning of monarchy? Is hereditary monarchy now so untypical of our society that it can no longer represent it? When people say "We don't want Charles, we'd prefer William", are

\* 'Faith & Reason' is edited by Paul Valley

## Why the monarch must wash the feet of the poor

### faith & reason

The anointing of the head of the Queen with holy oil at the Coronation was not an empty ceremony. Rather it offers the theological key to re-defining the role of sovereign, argues Canon Alan Wilkinson.

This was his chance to kill him. But David refused:

The Lord forbid that I should on this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed... (1 Samuel xvi.6)

In Judaism the king was not only a warrior and a judge. He was also charged to have a special care for the poor and for the faith of the nation.

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Your father judged the cause of the poor and needy; then it was well. Is not this to know me? says the Lord (Jeremiah xxi.15-16)

That is to say that

# A new model parliament, made in Scotland

The Scottish people have spoken and have responded with due humility, talking of history, momentous days, and the work ahead. Tony Blair rightly took the credit for trusting the people. "And the people have had the courage and the confidence to trust themselves," he said yesterday. But democracy is like a game of Chinese whispers and we have an imperfect idea of what it is the people were really trying to say, and hence what its long-term significance might be.

The immediate ambiguity is that which is symbolised by Labour's uneasy alliance with the Scottish National Party. For Donald Dewar, this was a vote to strengthen the Union between England and Scotland. For Alex Salmond, it was a vote to weaken it, and part of a process leading to independence.

Of course, as all three home-rule parties, including the Liberal Democrats, repeatedly insisted, which of these futures comes to pass is a matter for the Scottish people, and limited home rule will allow them to clarify that choice – just as the referendum enables the Scottish people, at a future date, to choose between higher, lower or unchanged taxes.

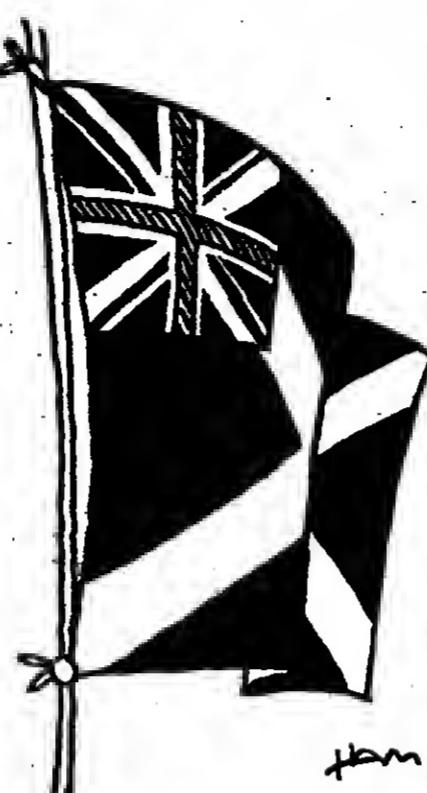
Yesterday, acknowledging the exhausted cheers of devolution campaigners, all passion nearly spent after 20 years on the road, Mr Blair described devolution as the "third way" between separatism and the status

quo. No doubt Labour's policy of no change in income tax rates is the "third way" between 3p in the pound up or down. It is an option familiar to the rest of us as the "middle way".

But the middle way does not have to be a static compromise: it is part of the genius of Mr Blair's vaulting rhetoric that he can speak of historic change in the language of moderation. Thus is the centre of gravity of British politics beginning to shift.

Standing against the inevitable backdrop "New Parliament, New Scotland", the Prime Minister declared: "This is a time for change, renewal and modernity." The qualifications were almost audible: "Tempered by continuity, stability and tradition." But there is no doubt that we were witnessing the Old giving way to the New.

Thursday's decisive "yes, yes" vote was the second domino in a row which started with the general election and which stretches into the unseen distance. But there are many lines of dominos leading from this point. Some of them are false trails. One is marked "Scottish independence". In the short term, the prevailing argument in Scotland is the most convincing: that passing power from London to Edinburgh will absorb and dissipate nationalist energies. For many years, a Scottish parliament will have its work cut out as it tries to get a grip on education, health and all the unexpected issues which present themselves



for debate and decision. In the long term, the national question may revive; but if it does, it is likely to be in European context.

Another false trail is marked "English neighbourhood". John Prescott on Wednesday urged the Scots to vote "yes, yes" because that will lead to greater decision-making for the English regions". No doubt they bore that in mind as they went to the polls in Oban and Pollokshields. It is only a pity that there were no exit pollsters to record that people voted "yes" because they wanted Yeovil to have a regional chamber of appointed local councillors. It is true that many regions of England will continue to feel ignored by London, and that many local politicians will continue to feel envious of Scotland and Wales. And Mr Blair offered some comfort to his deputy prime minister by saying that the referendum marked the end of the "era of big centralised government". But the truth is that directly-elected mayors for big cities would be more relevant to most people's lives than a layer of regional government.

There is a danger, however, that this government's early start on the "unfinished business" of devolution will focus debate about democratic reform on the boundaries between bits of the United Kingdom. What is more significant about the Scottish parliament in the long run is that it will be elected by a proportional system, which

could lead to the renewal of democracy itself, rather than simply its structures.

The Scottish parliamentary elections will be held in 1999, and the parliament itself will open with the new century. A year later there will probably be a UK-wide referendum on the question of a proportional system for electing MPs to the House of Commons. The result of the Scottish elections, and the relationship between Labour and Liberal Democrat members when they take their places in the Edinburgh parliament, will provide a working model for the rest of the country to consider.

Given that under a proportional system Labour is unlikely to win an overall majority in the Scottish chamber, its First Minister will need Liberal Democrat support to govern. So Paddy Ashdown's flirting with the word "coalition" in this week's *New Statesman* was not quite as presumptuous as it seemed.

This, rather than outdated projects for Scottish independence or devolution to the English regions, is the place of Thursday's vote in Britain's democratic history. It is a story of resumed progress after 18 years of arrested development, but the "re-constitution" of the United Kingdom is not simply going to continue where Labour left off in 1979. We are now setting off in a much more interesting and challenging direction.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Scottish vote must lead to British federalism

Sir: Let us rejoice at the result of the Scottish referendum. But let us also consider the inevitable and beneficial consequences for all four nations of Great Britain. If there is to be devolution to Scottish, Welsh and ultimately Northern Ireland parliaments then this must surely lead us down the road to British federalism.

Why not? Quite apart from the claims of the Celtic nations to be self-governing, do not the English also have the same right? We must surely have four self-governing assemblies, with a further federal assembly on top.

This is the opportunity to dispense with the House of Lords and replace it with an elected federal parliament exercising whatever overall responsibilities we decide to reserve it.

We need not abolish the monarchy. But if in the future there was a need for a federal president, there would be nothing to prevent members of the royal family with

appropriate skills from standing for the office. As remarked in your article on Mary Robinson ("Farewell to a right royal president", 11 September), the fact of election, not inheritance of an office, gives confidence and a true sense of purpose.

Wake up Britain! A new dawn in Scotland gives all of us the chance to create a democratic constitutional structure, not dominated by any one nation, or archaic and outworn conventions.

It is time to take the best of the old into a new and more flexible system. Who knows, a strong British Federation might one day even feel at ease within the wider world of an enlarged Europe.

JOHN CRAGG  
Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire

Sir: In your coverage of devolution issues you imply that this is an issue for Scots alone. Actually, there are a lot of English people living up here who are entitled to vote.

I am one of these and have voted yes, yes. Quite simply, even if you do not carry a cultural heritage of dissatisfaction with the current arrangements, you quickly learn to accept the fact that Scotland is not well understood south of the border. Its distinctiveness in terms of the legal and educational systems, its sheer size, and even the fact that its climate is so different that it makes the UK conventions about special winter payments contentious, are all facets of the issue.

You do not need to be Scottish to accept the case for devolved powers.

PHIL LYON  
Dundee

Sir: Can we be assured that the new Scottish Parliament will use its tax raising powers to pay its costs, salaries and the expenses of running the referendum rather than being subsidised by the rest of the United Kingdom?

GRAHAM EVANS  
Brixworth, Northampton

### Nato's role in European defence

Sir: Michael Howard is wrong to assert that a common European foreign and security policy (CFSP) poses a threat to the role of the US and Nato ("Howard says Brussels is threat to Nato", 9 September).

Prior to the Amsterdam summit earlier this year, both Tony Blair and Robin Cook stressed the continuing importance of Nato and its role in European defence. The subsequent Amsterdam treaty clearly specifies that any common European defence policy must both respect the obligations of member states towards Nato, and be compatible with the Nato framework.

Nor is the special relationship between Britain and the US threatened by a common foreign and security policy. Stuart Eizenstat, speaking in 1995 as US Ambassador to the EU, outlined the American Administration's backing for a European CFSP, saying that the US "fully support(s) the European defence identity and the Western European Union as the European pillar of Nato".

Mr Howard also fails to recognise that the Amsterdam treaty safeguards the right of member states

to take an independent foreign policy line. Under the process of constructive abstention, all member states retain the right to opt out from a collective foreign policy decision.

A common European foreign and security policy will widen the capacity for EU member states to work together to prevent future conflict breaking out in the central European states. Mr Howard mentions the Gulf War but neglects to say that the EU countries acted together to apply sanctions on Iraq after its invasion of Kuwait. The uniform application of sanctions aptly illustrates how a CFSP can enable member states to act in concert.

As Mr Howard says, many Europeans still see Nato as the basis of their defence and cherish their links with the US. What he fails to state is that a CFSP effectively ensures that the EU has an extra leg to stand on, without having to sacrifice the security provided by the US and Nato.

STEPHEN WOODARD  
Director  
European Movement  
UK  
London SW1

### 'Evangelists' trying to save British science

Sir: The Save British Science Society (SBS) welcomes the support of *The Independent* (leading article, 9 September) in making the case for increased public funding for British science, with a balance preserving an adequate share for basic research. We have been saying as much for some years and our analysis is broadly confirmed by the Dearing report: "The resources must be found to enable the UK to maintain its place as one of the world's major research centres... [and our universities] to continue to be valued partners in research with overseas institutes."

We in SBS are not prophets of doom: we are evangelists for an enlightenment of society and government in their understanding of the role of British science, and its contributions to world culture and our economy. SBS has organised a number of symposia on how the exploitation of academic research might be improved, the most recent sponsored by the Department of

Trade and Industry and a major bank. The path to discovery and application is usually tortuous, unforeseeable and unpredictable. Results and techniques from unrelated fields are often crucial to advance. This must be remembered when "greater selectivity" is invoked. Selectivity will always be with us, the imagination of scientists knows no bounds, but whenever the screw on basic research is tightened, opportunities will be lost.

To "make the best of British science", and ensure it continues its record of outstanding contributions to the "global enterprise" of advancing the frontiers of understanding, we must ensure that internationally competitive levels of resource reach our best scientists and engineers, enabling them to exercise fully the originality and flair for which British science is justly renowned.

DR JOHN MULVEY  
Director, Save British Science Society  
Oxford

### Even 'good' employers need trade unions

Sir: Your opinion (leading article, 10 September), "Yes we need unions, but unions need to change", is based on a fundamental misunderstanding. It is not just because some employers "fail to reach the gold standard" that trade unions are needed. It is because, as you say, "conflicts between those who create jobs and those who take jobs are inextricable". I write as a former trade union official, who spent much of his working life dealing with workplace

safety and health hazards. Statutory national standards of occupational safety and health are set by governments, not by employers or employees. Both sides of industry have an equal right to be consulted in their formulation. Employers, even good employers, of whom there are many, cannot be accepted as sole arbitrators. That is one important reason why trade unions are necessary.

C.R. DALE  
Saffron Walden, Essex

## LETTER from THE EDITOR

Torrents of letters from readers have continued to arrive here, in the wake of Diana's funeral. The sheer weight of correspondence means some replies are being delayed. Apologies. I am going as fast as I can. But this is clearly one of those stories where an editor cannot win. The paper has been savaged by some of you as a sneering republican rag, while others think I am a slack-jawed monarchist stooge; some felt we were ludicrously pro-Diana and others that we were ludicrously anti-Diana; not I, but I have had letters complaining about far too much, too chocolate-sticky coverage; I have had others asking whether any of us here have a heart.

Did we get everything right? Of course not. Was the overall balance wrong? Looking back, we may see the time as one of mass hysteria, in which the paper was implicated, but the feelings were real enough at the time. It's hard for me to be objective, but I felt we kept the balance and tension this paper depends on. What is clear is that the death and mourning provoked strong responses of an unpredictable kind. I was wryly amused by the Scottish reader who politely explained that *The Independent* had done very well, but that he felt obliged to make a stand against the tabloids and, since he didn't read a tabloid, had decided to cancel the *Indy* instead. Another reader wrote similarly. I also enjoyed the reader who said he had agreed with almost everything in the paper, but he bought *The Independent* to be provoked; and could we make sure it didn't happen again.

Editors are required to take criticism on the chin: the customer is always right, and all that. Even so, perhaps I could note that intemperate and offensive language doesn't help the case; one correspondent who described our writers as scum and bitches and myself in less complimentary terms than that, is now outraged that his letter was not published in full. Well, bell, my friend, there are limits. Many thanks, though, to those who wrote applauding the decision.

Andrew Marr

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

The people's party and the people's princess combined could lower the Buckingham Palace flag for good – Derek Draper, former adviser to Peter Mandelson

The last thing we need is a New Monarchy like New Labour – Lord Tebbit

Having a hereditary monarchy is like having a hereditary rugby team – Paul Flynn, Labour MP

If you have a Royal Family you have to make the best of whatever personalities the genetic lottery comes up with – Bea Pimlott, royal biographer

A review in the *Financial Times* said I was an extremely funky pub pianist. That was a good summung-up of what I am – Elton John Every room in my house is unbelievably tidy. I'm getting treatment for this – Michael J Jackson, star of 'Brookside'

If people saw me spitting blood trying to deal with a problem they'd realise this is not the ministry of bloody fun – Tony Banks, sports minister

I have learnt that the cutting edge of tax proposals is in the small print – Tam Dalyell MP, anti-devolutionist

People go into counselling and never emerge. I wonder if counselling isn't the new religion – Dr Raj Persaud, psychiatrist

I pity non-fiction writers. How are you going to live in a dumbed world when you are just living in it, no longer giving it some shape? – Martin Amis, author

A dear old poppet – Stephen Fry, actor, on Peter Mandelson



'Yes, yes' voters in Edinburgh celebrate their victory

Photograph: Reuters

### Cycle network needs rethinking

Sir: The research by the Dean Environmental Alliance showing that the opening of cycle routes in the Forest of Dean has greatly increased motor traffic (8 September) confirms what many people have feared over the work of Sustrans.

The name is short for "Sustainable Transport" and its original aim was to provide cycle routes that would make cycling a safe alternative to the car. But Sustrans has concentrated, not on routes that can fulfil that function, but on routes that are relatively easy to establish, mainly disused railways in attractive countryside. As the Dean research shows, these do not meet a transport need, but act as yet another remote facility and the destination of yet more car journeys that would otherwise not have been made. The environmental damage likely to be done by Sustrans's lottery-funded National Cycle Network should now be recognised and the project completely rethought.

What cycling, as sustainable transport, needs is space on the ordinary roads. This cannot be provided by finding odd strips of land that no one else wants anymore. It means giving the kind of priority, and spending some of the sort of money, that is now given to road provision for motor traffic.

K HAGGETT  
Walker, Sheffield

### Don't victimise the regional press

Sir: Polly Toynbee ("Weasel words in the last-chance saloon", 11 September) should remove her blinkers. Her diatribe on the perceived ill of her industry tarred a huge number of undeserving victims, namely the regional press.

There is a greater world beyond the national comics and the sanctimonious heavies to make the total picture of what she describes as a "grotesque press".

Many more people in this country read regional papers than national ones. These journals and their editors don't always get it right. But they respect, welcome and adhere to the Code of Practice in a manner very different from Polly Toynbee's vituperative reaction to it.

There is much good, indeed great journalism in the national press. Recognising that is a prerequisite for identifying the rotten bits.

Polly Toynbee tells us how she laughed out loud when she came across the "legendary" Code of Practice. Her jibes sit incongruously with her later assertion that it is "a good code, full of truth".

PETER HARWOOD  
Chairman,  
Welsh Council  
Editor  
*The Ramblers' Association*  
Newport  
Pembrokeshire

### Problems of walking in Pembrokeshire

Sir: It was interesting to read about the problems East Nolton Riding Stables are having on Druiddstone beach, Pembrokeshire (Letters, 11 September) against riders on the sands".

They are as nothing, however, compared with the problems walking visitors and local people have had with the landowners over more than a decade: an illegal diversion of the Pembrokeshire Coast Path (a National Trail) down a dangerous cliff without prosecution; intimidation of walkers on other public paths, including turning back path surveyors; no signs or waymarks on the paths and riding horses illegally down a public footpath on to the beach.

Of more relevance than the plight of the horse riders on the beach is why the local authorities, including the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park, have not taken resolute action to protect and assert the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway.

PETER HARWOOD  
Chairman,  
Welsh Council  
Editor  
*The Ramblers' Association*  
Newport  
Pembrokeshire

### Inca punishment for the privileged

Sir: Your opinion (leading article, 10 September), "Yes we need unions, but unions need to change", is based on a fundamental misunderstanding.

It is not just because some employers "fail to reach the gold standard" that trade unions are needed. It is because, as you say, "conflicts between those who create jobs and those who take jobs are inextricable". I write as a former trade union official, who spent much of his working life dealing with workplace

safety and health hazards. Statutory national standards of occupational safety and health are set by governments, not by employers or employees. Both sides of industry have an equal right to be consulted in their formulation. Employers, even good employers, of whom there are many, cannot be accepted as sole arbitrators. That is one important reason why trade unions are necessary.

C.R. DALE  
Saffron Walden, Essex

Sir: Jack O'Sullivan names the new spirit following the death of Diana, the New Protestantism; Angels Williams (

the saturday story

# The UK's new export: Brit Grit

While the think-tanks struggle to find new ways to sell Britain's 'image' abroad, the country already has a new identity that is not only appealing and successful: it's true. Reggie Nadelson tells us what New Yorkers really like about the United Kingdom

Last week, unable to bear any more of the wall-to-wall TV coverage of Princess Diana's death, I go out to the pictures. *The Full Monty* is playing at my local theatre here in New York where the midday audience consists largely of seniors. (The tickets are cheaper.) And they're in stitches. Here's their take on six unemployed guys in Sheffield, steel workers on the dole, who cook up a scheme to make a buck as male strippers, and here's this audience of American oldies who are clutching each other from laughing, popcorn spilling merrily onto the floor. The movie has a grim setting; half the northern lingo must be incomprehensible; the guys are not exactly Ralph Fiennes. We are not talking *Brideshead Revisited*. But it is tough, raunchy, sweet, accessible and very funny. This is Brit Grit and we love it. Jane Austen, RIP.

It's not just New York, either. Next week, *The Full Monty*, which cost around £2m – lunch money for a Hollywood exec – opens big in America. It's already made a bundle and looks like being the *Four Weddings and a Funeral* of 1997. And if *Four Weddings* gave America a vision of Britain as a modern middle-class fairy tale, then *The Full Monty* gives it to us as a working-class fable, an inside-out look at gender politics and unemployment brought off with a lot of laughs and a generous but unsentimental heart.

These guys in *The Full Monty* discover that, unemployed, they're as worthless as the scrap metal around them. That without work or money they're reduced to hunks of raw meat – and hunks they are not. Desperation is the mother of their invention: to fix their miserable lives, they cut through the crap of convention, risk embarrassment on every level and let it all hang out. Literally. "Well, no looking," Dave

warns as they try out their strip number in Gerald's front room. "And no laughing ya bastards." The real thing, Brit Grit. At the movies we've had *Secrets and Lies*, *Breaking the Waves*, *Trainspotting*, *The Van*, *Twin Towns*, *Brassed Off*, and now *The Full Monty* and not a Corgi among them. The game is up. These days, we love you for your Chippendales wannabes more than your Chippendales chairs. Americans have had it with chintzes and prunes, we're bored rigid with guardsmen in stupid fur hats, men in striped pants selling stale groceries, heads of state who talk with a mouth full of fruit, and London hotels that make you stick on a crappy old tie if you want to eat. (We've been here before, of course, in the Swinging Sixties, so-called, but it was a long, long time ago and in another country and that revolution was about styles of style rather than styles of being.)

Give us the cocky Robert Carlyle in *The Full Monty*, give us Robbie Coltrane in *Clockwise*, *Oasis* and *Absolutely Fabulous*, Irvine Welsh and Eddie Izzard, and a young and handsome Prime Minister who, when he came out to offer comfort over Diana's death, had a lump in his throat and his heart on his shirt/sleeve. Long Live King Tony. Down with the iron curtain.

And Diana knew that was the point. The stories, the questions, the obsession, the myth-making, will go on and on: Britain has its own grubby now. But the touchy-feely outpouring, the instinctive gathering of the tribe, the warmth, the lack of embarrassment, my God, Britain last week looked like something we Americans could get down with at last. No more hiding. No more suffering in silence, no more stiff upper lip. You took it all off and we watched, in thrill. The emotional *Full Monty*.

In the presence of this Britain, we can dump

our insecurity complex. Maybe that's why Americans adored Diana. For years we had been retailed back to ourselves by the Brits as a slavering nation of suckers, glassy-eyed Anglophiles in thrall to anything that had an English decent or a title. (Didn't Nancy Reagan actually curtsy to the Queen once?) As it turns out, we loved Diana because she was the anti-Royal. She was one of us in our dreams: she was our new Jackie, a movie star, the dazzling filament in the translucent lightbulb. Pop.

As a result of what has happened we have changed," said the Prime Minister of the events surrounding Diana's death. No, the change was in the works. What happened crystallized it, clarified it, was a catalyst. People already knew, in America, we knew.

For years at a time, we don't actually think about Britain at all over here; we're as xenophobic and insular as you are in reporting the news and we're no longer a majority European culture. Some of what we do think about Britain, when we think about it, is what's peddled to the reading classes here by a handful of powerful British magazine editors living in New York, kind of East Coast division of London's chattering classes, which means what we get is about their prejudices and power struggles.

It's a schizoid rag-bag of attitudes and images we've got of Britain one way and another now, but nothing is less coherent than change and, as a wise guy (paraphrasing Ralph Waldo) once said, "consistency is for fools". So it's not surprising that even as Brit Grit takes bold, some of us have left our hearts and minds at the travel agents' theme park.

Earlier this week, 5,000 American travel agents met in Glasgow; that grittiest of British cities and pleaded with Britain not to "modernise". A bagpipe band played in the background. A stall selling "Agatha Christie Country" did enough brisk business to make you weep. *Trainspotting* this was not. "Heritage" still sells, it seems, according to the

American Society of Travel Agents whose president said, "What are you going to do, rebuild Big Ben?" A lot of us still want cashmere and crumpets not Galliano and goat's cheese. Well, 3.24 million of us Yanks travelled to Britain last year – that's about one of us for every 18 of you – and we spent 2.4 billion bucks. Send in the Morris dancers.

Curiously, in the same week that American travel agents met in Glasgow, Demos, the think-tank, issued its report on the need for modernization, for the "rebranding of Britain". Britain, says Demos, suffers from the "misrepresentations of foreigners". But if the travel agents of America purvey one kind of theme park, the Demos mob have something just as bland in mind: what could be worse than institutional modernisation?

Please, God, not the Vision Thing, not that. No working parties, no image makers, no marketing guys and public relations hacks, please, please, please, you had all that in the Eighties when the Thatcher government thought it didn't matter what they did so long as the image was right; all you got were dirtier streets, degraded health care, lousier education, miserable trains, the dismemberment of the best television on earth. Oh, and empty steel mills. Which brings me to *The Full Monty*, but I'll get back to that.

In the light of our current fascination with the messy, funny, angry, raunchy expressions of Brit Grit, in the light of the spontaneity of the Diana Nation in full flight, it's pretty curious reading extracts from the Demos report. Demos, if you ask me, is out to lunch. Speaking of which, one of its suggestions (along with the need for a new furniture in its embassies!) is to offer tourists arriving off planes and ferries "morsels" of the new British cuisine.

I can see it now: me, bleary-eyed, staggering off a flight from New York at Heathrow at 3am. A perky young Demos person rushes towards me with morsels of, say, goat's cheese mousse from Kensington Place. Welcome to Britain. "Tourists

think the food is bad and the natives arrogant," the report goes on. (Hey, I only take my cues from your Prime Minister who went to Tuscany this year.)

You want to fix things? You want more and happier tourists? Look, we're willing to spend billions every year coming over to see you and what we care about is that London hotels are hideously overpriced and seaside resorts are a rip-off. That the natives, especially those working in provincial shops and restaurants, are not so much arrogant as sullen. Angry. But a lot of them are young people working for minimum wage without a hope in hell of anything better. It would make me plenty sullen.

If the Government does what governments ought to do, if it provides the jobs, the education, the health care, it won't need to change the furniture in its embassies. The trickle down effect, the feelgood factor, will have the tourist classes cheering.

Most hilarious of all, however, is the Demos idea that you can codify, formalise, and institutionalise Britain's "eccentricity, individuality and non-conformity", and that these can go into a "toolkit" for renewing Britain's identity and telling its stories. It's an almost fabulously old-fashioned idea, like early socialist engineering at its silliest. Anyhow, we're just now getting to know who you really are; don't put the wraps back on.

Britain's stories are getting told the way they always do – by people who make films and TV programmes and plays and music, by designers and inventors, writers and researchers and scientists. And the grit's in the rebellion, the genius in the seditious response to institutions, to the establishment, to the received image: it doesn't matter if it's Diana against the in-laws or the guys in *The Full Monty*. That's where the bravery is. That's what gives Diana her following and what turns a bunch of guys "jiggin' around in the buff" into a joyous fable of true Brit Grit.

The wraps are off: Britain has begun to reveal all, and not just with *'The Full Monty'*

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Shooting defenceless – yet very tasty – grouse is what I do each August in Scotland. My man comes along but does not kill. I do. It makes me feel like the man I always wanted to marry. I reckon if you are going to eat something with a face, you should have the nerve to kill it yourself. My man insists that beef comes not from cows but from Sainsbury's.

I justify hunting psychologically. Those grouse look more depressed with each passing year. Like lobsters in restaurant tanks, they want to die. I'm the grouse's answer to Dr Kevorkian.

There's a huge difference between rural and urban in Scotland. These Scots really love the land. They work hard to maintain the forests, fences, pheasants, fish, all that. Land to us city-dwellers? Why, that's something to mow, isn't it? That's why my friend Roy, who has chosen to make his life in the Highlands, is keen on rural people's land rights as well as getting a "voice for Scotland".

Symbols of this rare breed of Scots is Bob. He's the town of Laggan's human answer to the Swiss army knife. Whatever needs doing, Bob can do. Stackng firewood kins, seeing if the pony's still alive, you name it. He's there when you need him and not when you don't.

Bob's real value locally is his coining the word "verragh", a universal sound which is this small town's contribution to the language of Shakespeare. Instead

of "yes", "all right", "okie doke", "okay", "aye", "yo", "sure", "fine by me", "no problem", "of course", "certainly" and all other forms of middling responses, Bob has invented the word for all occasions: the question to the question of the gods. "Yerragh."

As Roy explains, "You need to celebrate the best contract of your life? Yerragh. The truck has broken down bringing the four-poster to the honeymoon hotel? Yerragh. The bottom has fallen out of your kayak? Yerragh."

Like any good invention, the whole town has adopted it for very good reasons. "Yerragh" lends a sense of community to these rural folk in a way other words can't muster. Indeed, "yerragh" works beautifully, subtly, relying on tone to reveal its meaning – much as the four tones of Mandarin Chinese reveal "me" to mean mother, a horse, rope or a swear word.

Anyone who wonders why Scotland voted Yes-Yes will understand devolution better if they consider the town of Laggan. They pull together. They know what's what. They are a true rural community struggling to keep itself as fit as possible. And the best people for that job are the people themselves.

No wonder they said in Laggan that the vote wasn't really a Yes-Yes. It was a "yerragh". Just like Bob – that ginger-haired symbol of the Highlands, the rustic example of everything good and Scottish – who, it turns out, was born in England.

He looks like my brother and that's why I went.

Don McCullin's portrait of a shell-shocked Marine, circa 1968, is the reason I went to the celebrated photo-journalist's exhibition at the Barbican in London yesterday.

This image of a young soldier – a broad-faced Marine whose staring eyes are barely discernible in the shadow of his helmet – could have been my brother. He looks just like him, although Michael died in 1967, the only one in our small town who went to war and never came back.

McCullin's coverage of war-torn Cyprus, Cambodia and Beirut rustles up feelings and recollections that have lain dormant for years. Seeing some of his famous images – troops running in the streets in Northern Ireland, for example – operates like a time-capsule. Personal history comes back in a flash. The feelings of his subjects – their despair, their dilemmas – are palpably present.

Although I suspect some critics may poo-poo McCullin's work as being too accessible, the beauty of these stirring photos is their balance. McCullin takes us far enough into human suffering to be quite distressed. Thank God he never leaves us there.

For me, each of McCullin's works is substantial as reading a novel in a nanosecond – downing a whole visual universe in pill-form. Go. See for yourself. Take tissues.

I did my bit for public transport today. I queued for a bus. No, it's the wait for the bus that is humiliating. That long, dull, slog that tells me that I'm just not successful enough. If I were, I wouldn't be standing there like a jerk.

Steadfastly, I thought of the environment. Maybe, by me taking the bus an ambulance could get through traffic faster. Maybe someone would be happier.

Not me. I was pestered, as usual, by tourists wanting to know what bus to take where. Despite my American accent, people always ask me questions meant for a London native. Maybe I look as if I know what I'm doing. Whatever, my large Cutler & Gross sunglasses aren't doing their job of repelling people.

"Which bus goes to Earl's Court?" asks a nice, grey-haired lady. She wears the same blue puffy coat as her grey-haired, smiling friend, Sisters? Friends? Clones? "The 74," I say with confidence. "Ah, 74. Thank you."

Half an hour later, the same lady is standing next to me, rocking slightly on her heels and humoring an annoyed tune. I can feel her looking at me as if I made up the idea of the 74 bus just to waste her time.

Another 15 minutes. She's not humoring now. Her friend is standing next to her, next to me, agitated. I'm beginning to feel responsible. The 74 hasn't come and I told them what was their bus. Ten minutes later. How could I have lied to two little grey-haired ladies? I lied the first cab that hurtles past.

## karen krizanovich



Mc



# business & city

FINANCIAL JOURNAL  
OF THE YEAR

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## Care First faces fight to secure £100m contracts

**Sameena Ahmad**

Care First, the troubled nursing homes group, is facing an uphill fight to secure £100m of contracts with two local authorities. News of the struggle to retain the business with the authorities comes just a fortnight after a boardroom row at the company, which culminated in Chai Patel quitting his job as chief executive.

According to sources Mr Patel, who joined Care First in October when his company, Court Cavendish, merged with Takare, is understood to have

fallen out with Keith Bradshaw, Takare's executive chairman.

The fallout from Mr Patel's departure has unsettled investors and has started to generate concern among some of the company's clients. Care First's shares have fallen steadily from 151p since the merger to the current level of 97.5p.

A source at Bedfordshire County Council said yesterday that it was reconsidering whether to sign a £70m 10-year contract with Care First, which is the UK's largest nursing home operator. The contract is due to be formally signed by

both parties on Tuesday next week.

Failure to secure the contract could be damaging to Care First's expansion plans. The contract with the local authority would be one of Care First's largest, involving managing all of the county's 15 elderly residential homes and also some day centres.

The terms of the deal also include a multi-million pound refurbishment programme and the establishment of a separate trading company, to be called Care First Bedfordshire.

An insider at Bedfordshire

County Council said yesterday: "We met Mr Patel and were very impressed with his professionalism. We selected his company as the best of four companies pitching for the contract."

"This is very worrying. We could very well reverse our decision given that one of the key players has left. It could very well be that this contract is not placed with anyone on Tuesday."

A contract from Bromley Social Services which was originally won by Mr Patel's former company, Court Cavendish, is also being "looked at closely" in the light of recent events, ac-

cording to insiders. The Bromley contract is worth £4m a year for five years.

Meanwhile there is still confusion about how Mr Patel's departure was handled within the group. While Mr Bradshaw maintains that Mr Patel's resignation came "out of the blue" to himself and the board, it is understood that Mr Patel went to Keith Ackroyd, a senior non-executive director, about his differences with Mr Bradshaw several weeks before his resignation.

Mr Patel is believed to have felt constrained in making de-

doubled to around £35,000. Both Mr Ackroyd and Ian Kirkpatrick, a second non-executive director, are currently talking to institutional investors who are concerned about Mr Patel's departure. Several institutions have called for Mr Patel's reinstatement.

Friends close to Mr Patel said, however, that he was unlikely to agree to return without the resignation of Mr Bradshaw.

He was also looking for the resignation of Ron Reid, finance director and formerly a director at Takare.

Dalgety ready to sell off its key assets

**Nigel Cope**  
City Correspondent

Dalgety, the struggling Winlaton and Felix petfoods business, is expected to put several of its key assets up for sale on Monday as part of an attempt to return value to long-suffering investors.

The company, which has issued two profits warnings in the last four months, is due to report the findings of its strategic review when it reports its full-year results on Monday. Analysts are expecting the company to announce news on some disposals which could include plans to sell all or part of two of its core businesses. The company would then be expected to undertake a share buy-back to prevent earnings dilution. Dalgety shares jumped 7.5p to 274p as the market warmed to the news.

"They certainly need to do something," one analyst said. "Management has been stretched by the problems in the petfoods business and the effects of BSE. A slimmed-down Dalgety might be more able to get more of a grip on its problems."

The divisions that are expected to be sold are the food ingredients business which analysts say could be worth upwards of £300m. The other candidate for sale is the Martin Brower food distribution in the United States which could fetch £50m-£60m. Analysts have suggested that Kerry Group, the Irish food company, or Garry Weston's Associated British Foods would be interested in food ingredients. The management team may be interested in Martin Brower, which would attract a lower valuation as its sale would need to be sanctioned by McDonald's, the fast food giant which accounts for the lion's share of the Martin Brower business.

The sale of all or parts of these two businesses would leave Dalgety focused on its petfoods business, which includes Felix catfood and Windsor dogfood and its agribusiness, which includes the Pig Improvement company.

Analysts say the Dalgety rump would then be vulnerable to a bid from larger food groups keen to expand their interests in petfood. Possible bidders would include Ralston-Purina, Heinz and Nestlé, which was the underbidder for Quaker's European petfoods operations bought by Dalgety two years ago.

It is thought that Richard Clothier, Dalgety's chief executive, may quit following the sale of some assets. He has come under fire for the two profits warnings and a share price which has underperformed the market by 63 per cent in the last five years.

One analyst said: "I think he is there to see through a short-term job. If he did these deals and returned some value then he might do the honourable thing."

Dalgety is expected to report full-year results in line with its July warning on Monday. Analysts are expecting profits of £55m.

## Heir apparent to Davis quits the Prudential

**Magnus Grimond**

Jim Sutcliffe, the man seen as heir apparent to Sir Peter Davis as chief executive of Prudential, is to leave the life insurance group at the end of the month after what appears to have been a power struggle at the top.

News of his resignation accompanied an announcement that his responsibilities for all Prudential's UK operations were to be split between four new market-based units. The changes are part of a radical shake-up of the business following the £2.2bn acquisition of Scottish Amicable earlier this year.

Sir Peter, who will now take direct responsibility for the UK retail operations, said yesterday that Mr Sutcliffe had been offered an alternative job involving "a redistribution of responsibility at board level. He saw it as not of the same importance and decided a clean break was what he would prefer." Mr Sutcliffe, who earned £25,000 a year and was on an 18-month contract, will receive a payoff, but Sir Peter implied that it would be heavily mitigated by how quickly it takes him to get another job.

The departure had been prompted by a difference of

style, Sir Peter said, but he denied that it was particularly sudden. "We have been discussing the reorganisation for three to four months and have been discussing the implications for him for a couple of months... There is nothing sinister and nothing sudden," he said.

He also denied that the departure had any connection with the pensions mis-selling scandal. The Pru admitted for the first time yesterday that it was "unlikely" it would meet the deadline for priority cases laid down by the Securities and Investments Board, which has said 90 per cent must be dealt with by 30 September.

However, insiders suggest that Mr Sutcliffe, who was seen as a strong favourite for the chief executive's job before Mr Davis arrived in May 1995, had been attempting to distance the UK operations from the group's head office. He was also being seen as having borne some responsibility for the Pru's failure to keep up with developments in direct sales of financial services, with the non-financial companies like Virgin and Marks & Spencer having stolen a march on the insurance giant by carving out a growing and profitable market in this area.



Sir Peter Davis, chief executive (left), and Jim Sutcliffe, head of UK operations, differed over responsibilities

Explaining the reorganisation, Sir Peter said they had been facing a changing market and "some compliance problems" in the UK, which still represented half the group. "I want to get closer to the UK market. There are some issues facing the market which I would like to see handled in smaller units with more responsibility for the UK managing directors."

The new divisions will be directed at the Pru's four main customer groups. One will focus on IFAs via the new Scottish Amicable operation, one will be based on the Pru's home sales force, another will deal with corporate pensions and the fourth is to encompass direct sales by telephone or computer. As well as Sir Peter, the new UK management team will be headed by John Elbourne, currently managing director of Prudential Assurance, Roy Nicolson, managing director of Scottish Amicable who will take over responsibility for IFA business, and Mike Harris, the former head of Midland Bank's First Direct banking operation who will add the new direct operation to his existing role as head of Prudential Banking.

The Prudential's shares fell 8.5p to 620.5p yesterday as the news of Mr Sutcliffe's departure was greeted with dismay by many analysts. Charles Landri at broker Société Générale Strauss Turnbull said Mr Sutcliffe had been reorganised out of a job.

"I think it's a great shame. He was very much the rising star at the Pru. As far as I know, he was held in very high regard both inside and outside the Pru. He was behind many of the market-leading moves at the Pru over the past five years."

Roman Cizdny at Merrill Lynch, who described Mr Sutcliffe as "a leading actuary and a great manager", said his leaving was a great loss to the company. Both analysts said Mr Sutcliffe, who has been with the Pru for 21 years, would have no difficulty finding another job.

Mike Waits, Midland's chief executive, said: "Ruddles has

Morland is planning to export Ruddles beers around the world to complement its Old Speckled Hen brand (above).

**Andrew Yates**

Morland, the second oldest brewer in the country, yesterday announced the acquisition of the Ruddles, the Rutland-based brewer, for £4.8m from Grotsch, the Dutch brewing group.

The deal should save Ruddles and its beers, such as Ruddles County and Best Bitter, which had appeared to be in terminal decline.

Ruddles has had a troubled history over the last few decades in the hands of a succession of big brewers. Grotsch was believed to have paid well in excess of £30m for Ruddles when it bought the business from Courage five years ago.

But sales of its beers have been sliding in the last few years despite a multi-million pound marketing campaign.

Mike Waits, Midland's chief executive, said: "Ruddles has

come home to a regional brewer at last. The brands have lost their way. A lot of money has been thrown at them with little success by a succession of big brewers who were probably more concerned with lager."

Morland is also looking to launch a fresh marketing campaign to revamp Ruddles in the UK, specifically designed to boost sales in off-licences and supermarkets. The group also hopes to export Ruddles around

the world, complementing its Old Speckled Hen brand which is currently sold in 17 countries.

However, a question mark hangs over the future of the Ruddles brewery, founded in 1858. Morland is conducting a review of the business and may close the brewery with the loss of 100 jobs and shift production to its own brewing headquarters at Abingdon, Oxfordshire. Ruddles brewery is currently only producing around

100,000 barrels a year compared to an output capacity of 300,000 barrels.

The acquisition marks the latest stage in the rationalisation of the regional brewing industry. Many of the smaller players have been forced to exit brewing, unable to compete with the larger players who have the resources to launch huge advertising campaigns. Eldridge Pope recently sold its brewery to a management buyout team and Ushers has taken over Gibbs Mew's brewing operations.

Despite this, Mr Waits denies that the days of the regional brewer are over. "Brewers with non-recognised brands will continue to find life more difficult. However, with more regional brewers exiting brewing and the big brewers concentrating on bigger brands there are more holes in the market. There is room for niche brands."

works of the system in the competitive market.

It also emerged yesterday that Ofgas had formally objected to proposals to subsidise pre-payment meter customers in a paper submitted last week to the Government by one of the two official working parties investigating the issue.

British Gas insisted it had not broken any rules. "We think the Ofgas is wrong on that," a spokeswoman said. The company said pre-payment meter tariffs had been frozen pending the outcome of a Government review into the

workings of the system in the competitive market.

The panel, led by the GCC and including most leading gas suppliers, said action was urgently needed to ensure low income customers were not penalised by competition.

The bank's top management in Amsterdam hopes the changes will put a brake on spiralling City bonuses and reduce staff defections at the same time.

The Dutch bank has been on a global shopping spree for the last couple of years and now has nearly 6,000 employees in its various investment banking operations. It has made acquisitions in Paris, Milan and Chicago in the last two years alone, having bought London-based Hoare Govett in 1992.

The bonus overhaul was announced at a meeting of 400 top executives from ABN Amro's investment banking division and is set to come into force in January.

Bonuses are to be linked much more closely to performance, with a part of the bonuses pooled in a fund, which will be withheld from executives for three years. The payments

## ABN Amro puts brake on bonuses

**John Wilcock**

ABN Amro is overhauling its bonus system for investment banking employees, including those in its Hoare Govett broking operation in London, by linking payments closer to performance and withholding the funds for three years.

A spokesman for the bank said yesterday: "We held a board meeting last week at which we decided that we needed a new system. We have made so many acquisitions that we have a whole patchwork of bonus payment systems which we now must bring into line with each other."

The bonus pool will be used mainly for top management, "to stimulate them to fight for the business as a whole and to remain with the bank for a longer period," said the spokesman.

The huge rise in City bonuses in the latest bull market has prompted criticism from the Bank of England and politicians alike. But attempts to limit rises by self regulation have wilted in the face of intense competition between investment banks to lure the best staff.

The acquisition of a number of old British merchant banks by giant foreign institutions with strong balance sheets has fuelled a bidding war for City talent.

## Spottiswoode faces call to help 'poor' gas users

**Chris Godsmark**  
Business Correspondent

Clare Spottiswoode, the gas industry regulator, came under intense pressure last night to block selective price cuts planned by British Gas which would see 3 million of the company's poorest customers largely excluded from a 9 per cent reduction in bills.

Sue Shipman, director of the Gas Consumers Council, wrote to Ms Spottiswoode yesterday evening, disputing the legality of

the cuts and urging the regulator to intervene. The letter argued that Centrica, the demerged British Gas supply business, had a statutory duty in its operating license to spread the reductions across all of its 19 million domestic customers.

It emerged that Ms Spottiswoode was told about the selective price cut plans several weeks ago and had apparently offered no opposition. They would knock £24 off an average £340 gas bill from January, but only customers who pay bills by

direct debit or who settle their accounts within 10 days would get the full benefit.

One million homes which use pre-payment meters would see no reduction, while a further 2 million low-income households would mostly see their bills drop by less than 1 per cent. The cuts are the result of a fall in pipeline charges levied by Transco, the pipeline division of the former British Gas, along with the abolition of the gas levy, a tax on North Sea contracts, in the Budget.

Ms Spottiswoode said: "The regulator has to explain why British Gas hasn't been asked to pass these savings on to everyone. They're discriminating against one class of customer." John Battle, industry minister, is understood to be unhappy with the plans.

The row was widened by independent gas companies competing in domestic competition trials, which claimed the cuts were designed to help British Gas fend off its rivals when the residential market opens up fully next year.

Energis, part of United Utilities, said it was "very concerned" that Ms Spottiswoode had not intervened. "Our major concern is over the timing of the announcement, which may well serve to discourage new players from entering the market," said a spokesman.

British Gas insisted it had not broken any rules. "We think the Ofgas is wrong on that," a spokeswoman said.

The company said pre-payment meter customers were not penalised by competition.

The bank's top management in

Amsterdam hopes the changes will put a brake on spiralling City bonuses and reduce staff defections at the same time.

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Bonuses are to be linked



JEREMY WARNER

'Giving the Governor a limited extension of, say, just two years would allow time enough for the newly independent Bank to get properly bedded in while providing the financial markets with the sort of continuity they want. To install a Labour placeman so soon after independence might look like political interference'

## A sensible solution to the Eddie George problem

Perhaps it has something to do with Diana's death, but things have yet to pick up significantly in the world of business and finance from their usual state of summer stupor. I might therefore be forgiven an unashamed meander through some matters of general interest. First, who's going to be the next Governor of the Bank of England?

The save Eddie George campaign (go on, give him another term) has apparently won a powerful ally – Tony Blair. Nobody actually knows what's in the Prime Minister's mind, but in the fevered imaginings of Whitehall and City gossip, Mr Blair has thrown his weight behind a second term for the Governor of the Bank of England.

This is actually an entirely plausible notion. Since Mr George dramatically threatened to resign over the Government's plans to strip the Bank of its supervisory functions, relations between the Bank and the Government are said to have improved quite markedly. Mr Blair is more than happy with the way the Bank has pursued monetary policy since it was given independence. The strength of the pound continues to cause some concern, but on the whole the Government could scarcely have hoped for a more sunny economic disposition. After throwing its initial wobbly, the Bank has also buckled under and demonstrated professionalism and speed in handing its supervisory powers over to the new Super-Sib. It is wrong to suggest, as some have, that

the Bank is continuing to be obstructive or even that this is what the Treasury thinks. In other words, the Governor has no reason to feel unhappy with Mr George. So why change him? There's a flip side to this argument, however. Why not change him? The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, might ask? By the time his contract comes up for renewal next July and that's quite long enough, this is an opportunity to put our own man in at the Bank so let's take it, some members of the Cabinet will be saying.

It is from this to-ing and fro-ing of the argument that the idea comes for giving Mr George a limited extension of, say, just two years. That would allow time enough for the newly independent Bank to get properly bedded in while providing the financial markets with the sort of continuity they want. To install a Labour placeman so soon after the new Bank of England Bill doesn't allow for a two-year term. It's five years or nothing. The clause could be changed but that would risk undermining the idea of independence by giving the Government scope for disposing of awkward Governors pretty much as it pleased.

So any extension of this sort would be based on the basis of an informal understanding. It would be understood that the Governor

would resign after two years and make way for Gavin Davies of Goldman Sachs, or who ever else happened to be in favour at the time. This seems to make such eminent sense that it is hardly surprising that the idea has assumed the status of truth. This is actually what has been decided, many are saying, and indeed the probability may well become self-fulfilling.

But actually nothing has been decided, nor does it need to be for six months or more. There is still everything to play for in the battle for the Governorship.

Can anything be read into the appointment of Steve Robson to the position of second permanent secretary at the Treasury? Under the last Government, Mr Robson was the Treasury's privatisation expert so it might have been expected that he would suffer the same fate as Sir Patrick Brown, recently ousted by John Prescott as permanent secretary to the Department of Transport because of his role in first bus, then water, and finally rail privatisation.

Instead, Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, has chosen to promote him. Why? There are all kinds of theories on this. For entertainment value, try the following. Morale at the Treasury is rock bottom. Career civil servants are being bypassed in the formulation of policy and are still hopping mad about control of monetary policy being ceded to the Bank of England. What are they going to do now?

Worse, they suspect the Chancellor is about to shake the whole place up in a way that will be highly uncomfortable for everyone concerned. Furthermore, the perception, if not the reality, is that policy is being run and implemented on the hood by a small coterie of special advisers led by the youthful Ed Balls. The Chancellor needed to do something to correct this view and so he gave a career Treasury man a leg-up in a way that ought to satisfy the troops and indicate that there are no hard feelings about what everyone did under the previous Government.

Actually, there may be just the tiniest element of truth in this explanation but the real reason is a rather more obvious one. Mr Robson is a classic and he's also new Labour through and through, a sort of reformed Thatcherite – a bit like Tony Blair really. It's amazing he's still at the Treasury at all, given the number of highly paid job offers he must have had from the City. The Chancellor would have been mad not to have put him at the centre of things. As it happens he's also a long-time advocate of the way Labour is reforming City regulation.

In other words, he fits the new administration like hand in glove. Were it not for the fact that he was already there, Mr Brown might even have wanted him as one of his special advisers.

I'm not a freemason, honest, but someone's got to stick up for the City's archaic form of local government. This may sound like trying to defend the indefensible but the case for reform is not nearly as clear cut as might be thought. Certainly the reforms proposed don't sound like much of an advance.

It has to be admitted that the present system does seem a little medieval. The electorate is confined to residents, of which there aren't many, small businesses, accountants and lawyers. The great bulk of people who work in the City and the companies that employ them have no say at all. Even if elected, an alderman can be blackballed as unsuitable. No revoicing is required.

But when all is said and done, no one can fault the way the Corporation of London is run. The Square Mile seems to be relatively good and efficient at administering its affairs, and despite its lack of accountability, there's been no recent case of corruption. Furthermore, the City has an unrivalled record in promoting Britain and winning inward investment. It is also Britain's biggest export earner. There is no evidence that any of these things would be improved by expanding the franchise. On the other hand, anything better than being merged with the London borough of Islington and if giving the foreigner a few more votes is the price of independence, then I'm all for it. Now what did I do with that apron?

## Shell answers its critics with £1.3bn chemicals shake-up

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

Shell, the Anglo-Dutch oil giant, yesterday moved to answer its critics with a radical shake-up of its chemicals businesses, coupled with a \$2bn (£1.3bn) deal to buy out its joint venture partner in the world's largest polypropylene producer.

The restructuring plans, a response to fierce price competition in global chemicals markets, involve Shell buying the 50 per cent of Montell, the Amsterdam-based polypropylene business, which it does not already own from Montedison of the Netherlands.

Montell was formed just two years ago to include most of the two companies' polypropylene making capacity, with manufacturing plants in 16 countries. Last year Montell, which was the number one producer of the chemical everywhere apart from Asia, had revenues of \$3.8bn and made profits of \$334m.

In a statement yesterday, Shell said Montell would continue to trade under its own name and with the same management, but would be coo-

trolled by the new chemicals group, called Shell Chemicals, being created when the reorganisation takes effect from 1 January. The acquisition also needed approval from the European Commission's competition authority.

The wider shake-up in the group, which was described by Shell as "decisive", would replace three existing divisions covering Europe, the US and the rest of the world, with a single company structure. A Shell spokesman said the move would not result in widespread job losses or other changes to the company's executive team.

The new structure, under Evert Henkens, currently director of strategy for the chemicals group, will create three presidents' posts for businesses in the Americas, Europe and Africa and Asia Pacific and the Middle East.

Analysts were disappointed at the decision to pour money into the chemicals business when other parts of the Shell empire have earned higher returns. Shares in Shell slipped 3.5p to 423.5p.

John Foalster, oil analyst with

Société Générale, was sceptical. "It's almost a non-event. It's not particularly a big deal in terms of Shell's cash pile. The money would have had a better return in other parts of the business such as refining and marketing. This is a damp squib and it's also an expensive damp squib."

The performance of Shell's chemicals businesses was singled out as disappointing by Mark Moody-Stuart, group managing director, at the company's financial results presentation last month. Outside the US earnings fell 38 per cent to £86m, with £30m of the fall blamed on the decision to spend three-quarters of the division's main maintenance budget in just three months.

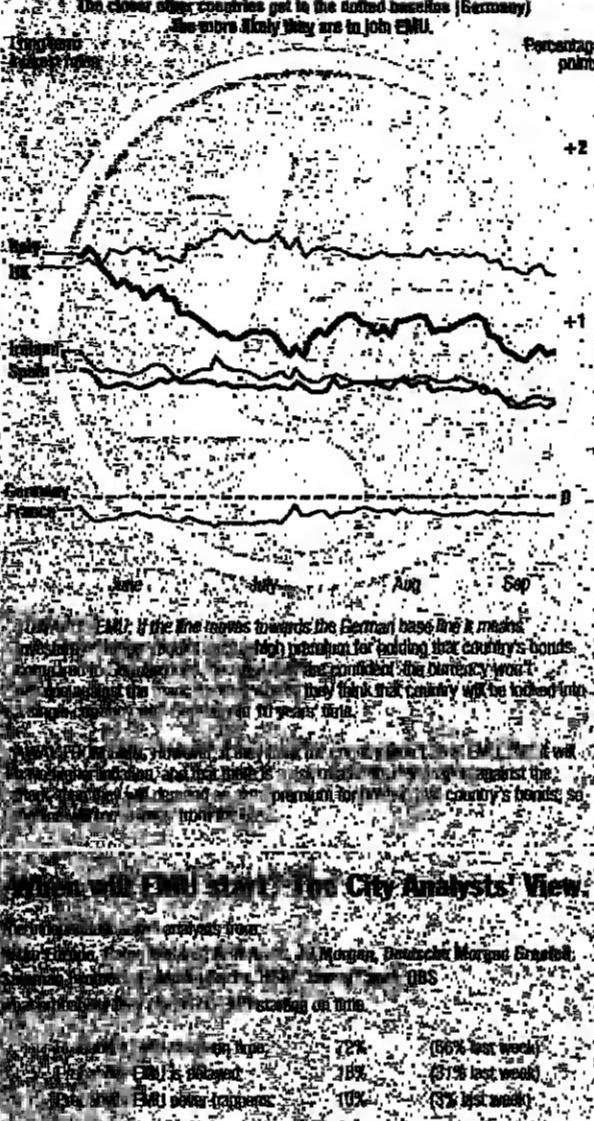
Shell has come under persistent fire from investors and analysts for its famously cautious approach to spending its £7bu cash pile.

Mr Moody-Stuart was forced to dampen speculation of imminent share buy-backs by Shell Transport & Trading, the UK quoted part of the group, as British Petroleum led the way with a series of buy-backs last year.

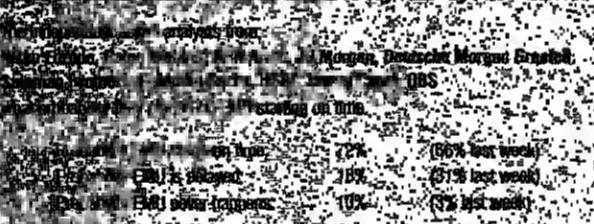
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John Foalster, oil analyst with

### Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view



### Who will join EMU? City analysts' view



## Mood of growing optimism

Magnus Grimond

Monetary union prospects received a big boost this week from the surprising news that Germany's budget deficit was running a hair's breadth above the Maastricht limit.

A combination of statistical revisions and other adjustments agreed with Brussels has slashed the figure for the first six months of 1997 from the previously announced Maastricht-hitting level of 3.6 per cent to 3.1 per cent, just outside the 3 per cent target.

As European finance ministers gather this weekend in Luxembourg, a mood of growing optimism seems to be pervading our panel of experts, albeit tempered with a little cynicism in some quarters.

Robert Prior-Jones Capel described the deficit figures as "surprisingly good" and certainly enough to increase the probability of EMU going ahead on time. However, he said the new numbers may prove somewhat optimistic about revenues raised by the state governments.

Julian Jessop of Nikko was even more sceptical. "I simply don't believe the 3.1 per cent figure," he said. "It was difficult to reconcile with higher unemployment and lower taxes seen so far this year."

## IN BRIEF

### Europeans are buying more cars

Western European new car registrations rose 5.3 per cent in August from a year earlier, led by the UK and Germany, the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association said. Volkswagen ranked first in terms of market share in Europe, with 15.5 per cent of the German car market in August, up from 14.6 per cent a year ago and down from 18.3 per cent in July. Western Europeans registered 1.219,000 cars in August, up from 1,157,500 a year earlier. In a longer-term comparison, which tends to smooth out monthly fluctuations, passenger car registrations rose 3.1 per cent in the first eight months of the year from the same period a year ago. UK registrations rose 9.6 per cent to 525,500 cars in August compared to 479,400 a year ago.

### New managing director at Johnson Fry

Johnson Fry Holdings has appointed Rebecca Thomas as group managing director to succeed Michael Fletcher, who has resigned. Charles Fy, chairman, said Mr Fletcher was going to pursue other interests. Mr Fletcher will receive a payoff under his one-year contract. The retail fund management group also promoted Alastair Atham to the post of marketing director. The company has already appointed a new finance director, Cathy Toman, from St James Place Capital, who will arrive next week.

### Saracen investors opt for Invesco offer

Saracen Value Trust ended a month-long bid battle yesterday by opting for the offer from Invesco Asset Management. HSBC Asset Management had triggered the battle with an unsolicited bid on 5 August, but Saracen shareholders preferred Invesco's plan. Under this plan Saracen will be liquidated and shareholders will able to switch to another trust, a unit trust or a cash alternative. Anthony Dick, Saracen's chairman, said that the impressive performance of the Invesco English and International Investment Trust had swayed a lot of shareholders. He said they had received letters of support representing 59.7 per cent of Saracen's issued share capital for the Invesco option.

### DTI grant for gene therapy company

Oxford Biomedica, the gene therapy company, has won a Department of Trade and Industry grant for almost a quarter of a million pounds to develop a process for the production of retroviral vector particles for gene therapy. The AIM-listed company said the funding would be used over a three-year period to develop the technology, which it says "has the potential to deliver genes at efficiencies higher than any of the current available methods, opening a raft of opportunities". Oxford Biomedica specialises in gene-based therapies for the treatment of disease. The company made a pre-tax loss of £1.25m for the nine months to 30 June 1997.

### John Lusty buys snack supplier

John Lusty Group is buying, via its main trading subsidiary, Trustin The Foodin, the business of Wunderbar for a maximum £2.25m. John Lusty also announced plans to raise around £2.3m by way of a underwritten one-for-four rights issue of 31,897 million shares at 8p each. The company said the acquisition of Wunderbar would substantially enhance the earnings per share of the group. Wunderbar specialises in the supply of luxury confectionery and savoury snacks to leading supermarkets. Its turnover for the year to April was about £7m.

### Stanley Leisure profits ahead

Stanley Leisure chairman Leonard Steinberg told shareholders at the annual meeting that betting turnover and profits were ahead of last year. He expected that the company to add a reasonable number of betting shops this financial year and disclosed that it was in detailed discussions in the case of one casino and in very early talks regarding another. The company has recovered from the effect of scratch cards, which initially caused its racing business a lot of harm, he said.

### American Port Services raises £4m

American Port Services has raised £4.38m before expenses through a placing of shares with institutional investors in the US and the UK. The placing was to widen the company's shareholder base and to strengthen its working capital position.

## Concern in the City as National Express directors sell shares

Andrew Yates

Two top directors at National Express yesterday made hundreds of thousands of pounds by exercising and selling large tranches of share options. The share sales raised some concern in the City, given that they came just 24 hours after National Express reported sharply higher half-year profits.

Colin Child, finance director, made a net profit of £541,000 by cashing in and selling three tranches of share options. The average strike price for the options was around 188p, and all the shares were sold in the market at 517p each. He now has just 4,666 shares left in the company.

Phil White, the transport group's chief executive, also raised £180,950 from exercising and selling large tranches of share options. The share sales raised some concern in the City, given that they came just 24 hours after National Express reported sharply higher half-year profits.

Analysts raised concerns that the share sales were a signal that the group may struggle to maintain its profit momentum. One analyst said: "This can hardly be seen to be a sign of confidence in the group."

However, National Express attempted to play down the significance of the share sales. A spokeswoman for the group

said: "I can assure you there is absolutely nothing sinister going on. Colin Child has raised the money to buy a house, Mr White has sold shares to settle some tax liabilities, that is all. The group is disappointed that the share sales will overshadow the company's good set of results."

She said that Mr Child was moving from the suburbs of Weybridge in Surrey to Winchester, the home of National Express's headquarters. He had finally found a new property after looking for a house for the last 18 months.

Mr White, who used to work in Birmingham at the group's West Midland subsidiary, is also understood to be looking for a new house around Winchester. However, the com-

pany refused to comment on whether he would sell more shares in the group to cover the purchase price.

Mr Child and Mr White are still sitting on a potential fortune. Mr Child has a further 213,075 share options, exercisable at prices as low as 75p compared to yesterday's share price of 521p. Mr White has another 178,227 share options.

Mr Child and Mr White were yesterday in Scotland meeting analysts and were unavailable for comment.

National Express said on Thursday that it planned another large round of redundancies, having already sacked 600 people from the workforce it inherited from British Rail.

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Analysts were disappointed at the decision to pour money into the chemicals business when other parts of the Shell empire have earned higher returns. Shares in Shell slipped 3.5p to 423.5p.

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## business

# Thomson Travel plans to cut price of holidays by 15%

**Andrew Yates**

Thomson, the UK's largest tour operator, yesterday said it planned to cut the price of its 1998 summer holidays by up to 15 per cent compared to this year. The move will mean a saving of as much as £150 for a family of four paying £1,000 for a holiday.

Thomson also said it was seriously considering legal action against the Association of Independent Tour Operators (Aito) over allegations it had made that Lunn Poly, the group's travel agency arm, gave its staff financial incentives to sell Thomson holidays in preference to other tour operators.

A Thomson spokesman said: "We have repeatedly said this is not the case. Anybody that says anything different is not telling the truth and there could be legal repercussions."

Aito says it has sent evidence to back its claims to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, which is currently investigating links between travel agents and tour operators.

A spokesman for Aito said: "All the big companies are involved in these practices. We have sent evidence to the MMC from former staff at Lunn Poly and Going Places [owned by Airtours] that they were offered payments to sell in-house holidays. They were also offered commissions to sell their own insurance."

However, Thomson yesterday launched a stinging attack on Aito in an increasingly bitter row between the big and small players in the industry.

Martin Brackenbury, a director of Thomson Travel said: "We are clear there is not a case to answer. Aito have

waged a clever campaign. They have dressed their commercial interests up with claims that the consumer will be disadvantaged. In fact, they want to destroy the discounts offered by the large travel agents for their own commercial ends."

Aito reacted angrily to Thomson's claims: "This suggests that Thomson is rather worried about the MMC enquiry. It smacks of a last-ditch campaign to send the MMC off the scene."

Thomson has recently launched an advertising campaign in the trade press defending its position and its sales methods and is considering taking its campaign to the national press.

Paul Brett, chairman of Thomson, said recently: "TTG [Thomson Travel Group] is accused by so-called independents within the industry of directional sell-

ing while they portray themselves as acting impartially. This is a travesty of the true situation and we will not tolerate any further misrepresentation."

A leaked letter from the MMC recently revealed that it was considering recommending that the tour operators rebrand their travel agents to make their relationship with the parent tour operator clearer or even dispose of a large chunk of its outlets.

The MMC has now finished

gathering submissions from interested parties in the industry. It expects to hand its final recommendations to Margaret Beckett, President of

the Board of Trade, on 7 November.

A final decision by the Government is not expected until early next year.



Tour wars: The MMC is investigating travel agents and tour operators and may recommend changes, such as re-branding, to make relationships clearer

# YOU'RE THE MAN



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Sonia Silverstein had fought tooth and nail for everything she'd ever got. So the deal with Orange took her by surprise. All her company's 60 phones on one bill. National daytime calls at only 12p-minute plus VAT, calls between Orange phones at just 4p-minute plus VAT, and BT calls to Orange for less than they'd be to Collnet or Vodafone. All achieved by calling Orange and without even raising her voice. Sonia Silverstein was on top of the world. And with Orange roaming available in Europe and beyond, she intended to stay there.

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## Skypharma shares plunge into freefall

**Sameena Ahmad**

Ian Gowrie-Smith, the founder of Skypharma, blamed a crash in the biotechnology company's share price yesterday on the fall-out from Biocompatibles' failure to agree a critical deal this week.

Shares in Skypharma, which makes generic drugs, plunged almost 30 per cent to 49p after the company announced a placing and warned that revenues from a key project would be delayed for a year. Yesterday's fall takes the group's share price perilously close to the placing price of 45p a share, risking the possibility that the £7.4m fund-raising may prove unattractive to investors. Skypharma's announcement follows a spate of disappointments in the industry this year.

Speaking as the group announced a more than doubling of interim losses to June, Mr Gowrie-Smith said that while the placing funds would meet the group's cash needs for the next 10 months, it would require another round of fund-raising before becoming cash flow positive. The group was also

looking to strike more collaborative deals to "conserve cash".

Mr Gowrie-Smith said that the share price fall was exacerbated by market conditions after shares in Biocompatibles, the medical coatings group, crashed 40 per cent in a day: "I've never run into such confusion among fund managers. They have lost confidence in their judgement of this sector. The one thing they have been riding high on, that looked a dead cert in their portfolio was Biocompatibles. We couldn't have given our shares to some of them. This is a black day and unfortunate timing for us."

News that a rival generic manufacturer has brought a low-dose version of a key heart drug to market before Skypharma also disappointed. But Mr Gowrie-Smith said he was confident in the group's future.

He said he had bought 100,000 shares yesterday morning and that 10 of the 13 board members had taken up £2.75m shares in the placing. "Today has been a black day, but tomorrow will be sunshine."

JPV1 is listed

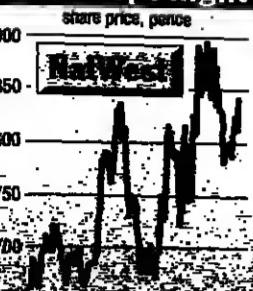
## market report / shares

3

## Data Bank

FTSE 100	4848.2	-6.6
FTSE 250	4630.8	-2.4
FTSE 350	2342.5	-2.8
SEAO Volume	618,256 shares	
37,409 bargains		
GHS Index	1,144	

## Share spotlight



## Ukrainian raid may have sabotaged £54m oil deal

It has not taken former communists long to learn how to play capitalists at their own game. This week a Ukrainian-funded stock market raid may have sabotaged a £54m agreed takeover bid.

Oil and gas explorer Ramco Energy, where former Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind is a director, seemed to be putting JKK Oil & Gas, headed by Railtrack chief Sir Robert Horner, out of its misery when it mounted a bid in July.

All seemed to be going smoothly until Ukragazprom, the state-owned Ukrainian energy company, picked up shares through stockbroker T Hoare & Co. It now has 11.67 per cent of the capital, paying around £7m.

The intervention has so far prevented Ramco, which has interests in the former Soviet Union, gaining control. It had hoped to do so on Thursday but had to be content with a

48.5 per cent shareholding. The bid has been extended until September 29. To complicate matters Ramco's share exchange offer equates to only 45.5p a share against 52p (the price the Ukrainians paid) in the market.

It could be that Ramco, off 17.5p to 1.137.5p, will have to increase, or even abandon, its offer. Still it is seeking to come to terms with the intruders. But Steven Bertram, Ramco's chief financial officer, said if it could not work with Ukragazprom "there would be no point in the deal".

JKK, with interests in Ukraine and Georgia, has been one of the market's new-issue disasters. Shares were placed at 190p two years ago. They touched 201p but have been in a ragged retreat since, hitting 79.75p before Ramco offered a little salvation.

The rest of the market ended a dismal week on a

suitably dismal note. True, shares finished above the day's worst. After swinging from extremes of a 23.2 points plus to a 20.9 fall, Footsie closed 6.6 lower at 4,848.2.

National Westminster Bank, on the persistent story of a deal over its securities arm, rose a further 7.5p to 841.5p. The shares have risen 29p in a weak market since the German Commerzbank's rights issue started rumours the cash was earmarked for the securities side of NatWest. Barclays, up 4.5p to 1,425.5p, got a little help from the gentle buy-back programme. Another 1 million shares were picked up at 1,422.84p.

## MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Like NatWest EMI, the showbiz group, is bucking the trend. Stories of a Seagram swoop edged the shares a further 3p higher to 386.5p.

BTR's conversion from conglomerate to focused engineering group failed to produce any follow-through on Thursday's 15p advance. Although NatWest Securities talked of a 280p target price, the shares relapsed 2.5p to 231.5p.

General Electric Co fell 14.5p to 380.5p after confirming it had been dropped from the list of bidders for the defence electronics arm of German group Siemens.

BICC lost 13p to 145.5p;

US glass maker Corning's warned about overcapacity and a slowdown in optical fibre demand.

Best of the blue chips was British Airways, up 14.5p to 678.5p on what seemed placatory noises from the European Commission over the proposed American Airways alliance and a settlement of the long-running and destructive cabin crew pay dispute.

Prudential Corporation's management shake-up trimmed the shares 8.5p to 620.5p.

Drugs remained under the weather although Biocompatible International rallied a further 17.5p to 592.5p. SkyePharma, the Ian Gowrie Smith vehicle, could not have picked a worse time to produce a cash call and disappointing figures. The shares crashed 19.5p to 49p. Another rights issue is likely next year.

Croda, the chemical group, was little changed at 365p low.

although Merrill Lynch has put a 420p target on the shares.

Next, the fashion chain, fell 23p to 731.5p on Credit Lyonnais Laing caution. Interim figures are due next week with the market looking for around £68.8m, up from £56m.

Dalgety, another reporting next week, gained 6.5p to 274p on hopes that a dismal profits out-turn will be countered by break-up developments at the pet foods group.

Inchcape, the international trader, fell 8.5p to 261p, lowest since April. It, too, reports next week and an interim profits fall from £82.8m to around £73m is expected.

Recruitment agency PSD rose a further 8p to 326.5p following a 42 per cent interim profit gain to £3.9m.

Linenlight, the bathroom and kitchen group, remained closed in a darkened corner. The shares fell 2.5p to a new 35p low.

## Taking Stock

□ Gaelic Resources enjoyed the day's biggest percentage gain, up 0.75p to 2p. The arrival of Greenwich Resources' men Colin Phipps and David Quirk spurred the action. They are pumping their European hydrocarbons business into Gaelic in exchange for shares and warrants.

□ Prime People, a recruitment group specialising in catering and hotels, held its 5.5p. Interim profits emerged at £17.000 and year's figure should be around £450,000 against £126,000.

□ Shares of oil explorer Emerald Energy are described as a "speculator's dream" by stockbroker Tether & Greenwood. It suggests US interests could be worth 5p a share and Colombian hopes 25p. The price held at 5.25p.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share excluding exceptional items. Other details: ✓ Rights issue; □ Ex-dividend date; A Ex date; u United Securities Market's Suspended or Partly Paid pm NI Paid Shares; z AIM Stock.

Source: FT Information

## The Independent Index

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## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000
BP	350000	ASDA Group	600000	Worlcom	540000
SIT	230000	Norwich Union	500000	Tesco	200000
SITI	220000	General Elect	520000	Cable & Wire	50000
Brown	180000	Luxfer	520000	Role Royce	50000
Orbitz	150000	Lyco TSB	500000	Vodafone	50000
				Bt Group	440000

## FTSE 100 Index hour by hour

Open 4851.2 down 56	11.00 4850.5 up 57	14.00 4852.5 up 75
8.00 4871.0 up 52	12.00 4860.5 down 142	15.00 4874.0 up 15
8.00 4853.0 down 77	12.00 4853.0 down 34	15.00 4853.0 down 34
8.00 4868.0 up 142	12.00 4855.0 down 192	Closes 4848.2 down 86

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Orbitz	150000	Lyco TSB	500000	Vodafone	50000
				Bt Group	440000

## Other Financial

Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000
BP	350000	ASDA Group	600000	Worlcom	540000
SIT	230000	Norwich Union	500000	Tesco	200000
SITI	220000	General Elect	520000	Cable & Wire	50000
Brown	180000	Luxfer	520000	Role Royce	50000
Orbitz	150000	Lyco TSB	500000	Vodafone	50000
				Bt Group	440000

## Telecommunications

Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000
BP	350000	ASDA Group	600000	Worlcom	540000
SIT	230000	Norwich Union	500000	Tesco	200000
SITI	220000	General Elect	520000	Cable & Wire	50000
Brown	180000	Luxfer	520000	Role Royce	50000
Orbitz	150000	Lyco TSB	500000	Vodafone	50000
				Bt Group	440000

## Retailers, Food

Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000
BP	350000	ASDA Group	600000	Worlcom	540000
SIT	230000	Norwich Union	500000	Tesco	200000
SITI	220000	General Elect	520000	Cable & Wire	50000
Brown	180000	Luxfer	520000	Role Royce	50000
Orbitz	150000	Lyco TSB	500000	Vodafone	50000
				Bt Group	440000

## Textiles &amp; Apparel

Stock	Vol 1000	Stock	Vol 1000	Stock</th



## Custom Made makes running

### Equestrianism

GENEVIEVE MURPHY

reports from Burghley

**David O'Connor and Custom Made, the winning partnership at this year's Badminton Horse Trials, now hold the lead for the United States in the European Open Three-Day Event Championships.**

O'Connor, the second last of 79 competitors in the dressage, overtook Ireland's Lucy Thompson, who had made a fine start to the defence of her European title with a splendid test on Weston Romance, who is now just 0.2pt behind the leader.

"She has natural flair, she gave her all and sparkled," Thompson said of the mare, who missed last year's Olympic Games through a leg injury. This is therefore her first three-day event since she won the 1995 European Open in Italy.

Britain's defence of the team title began satisfactorily. With all four team members now in the top 12, the British are ahead of the United States and New Zealand, with the Netherlands in fourth place and the best of their European opponents.

Christopher Barling, lying fifth on Word Perfect II, is the highest placed of the home riders. Having finished sixth in "pure" dressage at the 1984 Olympic Games, he has no problem with the two flying changes, which were introduced into the three-day event test this year. Word Perfect gave an all too rare demonstration of how the movement should be executed.

Mark Todd, at present the best-placed New Zealander in sixth place on Broadens News, is one point ahead of Britain's William Fox-Pitt who is seventh on Cosmopolitan II. Todd's compatriot, the reigning Olympic champion Blyth Tail, could manage no better than 21st on Ready Teddy, whom he rode with the utmost tact.

Today's cross-country could bring a major re-shuffling in the order. "It's a very strong course, in some ways it's tougher than Badminton," O'Connor said, after his outstanding dressage, which was one of the best that Custom Made has ever done.

Fox-Pitt is hoping that he will be able to settle Cosmopolitan in time to cope with the problems at the Leaf Pit Log and the Kennet Tree Stumps, fences three and four. The horse, who is naturally exuberant, will need to be concentrating if he is to answer these early questions.

Results, Digest, page 29

• **COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP:** All-rounder frustrates Glamorgan while Donald keeps Warwickshire's faint hopes alive

# Grayson plays his part in title race

DAVID LLEWELLYN  
reports from Cardiff  
Glamorgan 361  
Essex 169 and 320-8

Yorkshire were yesterday playing a larger part in the build-up to the outcome of the County Championship than might have been anticipated. Of course there were the goings-on at Headington, but along the banks of the River Taff a lone Yorkshirer was seen between Glamorgan and a resounding victory over Essex.

Paul Grayson hails from Ripon, but he discarded the White Rose to join Essex for the 1996 campaign after six unfilled seasons with Yorkshire.

## Donald departs with a flourish

MIKE CAREY  
reports from Edgbaston  
Warwickshire 418  
Gloucestershire 113 & 224  
Warwickshire win by an innings and 81 runs

Allan Donald—who else?—ended Gloucestershire's modest resistance here yesterday by bowling fast and straight, even off a considerably reduced run-up, to take four wickets for 25 runs in 7.5 overs, all of which nudged Warwickshire into third place in the Championship.

Depending on events' elsewhere, the title is still a mathematical possibility, however remote, and the weather is uncertain enough for the front-runners to be casting anxious glances over their shoulders.

But whatever Warwickshire achieve in their final game, against Northamptonshire at Edgbaston, they will have to do it without Donald. He will play on Sunday, but then return to South Africa to prepare for a tour of Pakistan and Warwickshire will miss him, not only his wickets but the ones that his presence obtains for the bowlers at the other end.

There were handshakes all round after Donald had signed off, characteristically, by uprooting Mike Smith's off stump. Helped by two stoppers for rain, which kept him fresh and

failed to do, keep his wicket intact after reaching his half-century. Grayson's graft is probably not enough to prevent defeat, but it restored some pride to an otherwise disappointing and unsatisfactory Essex performance overall and took them into a lead of 128 runs. So far he has been at the crease for almost four hours while frustrating Glamorgan's Championship challenge.

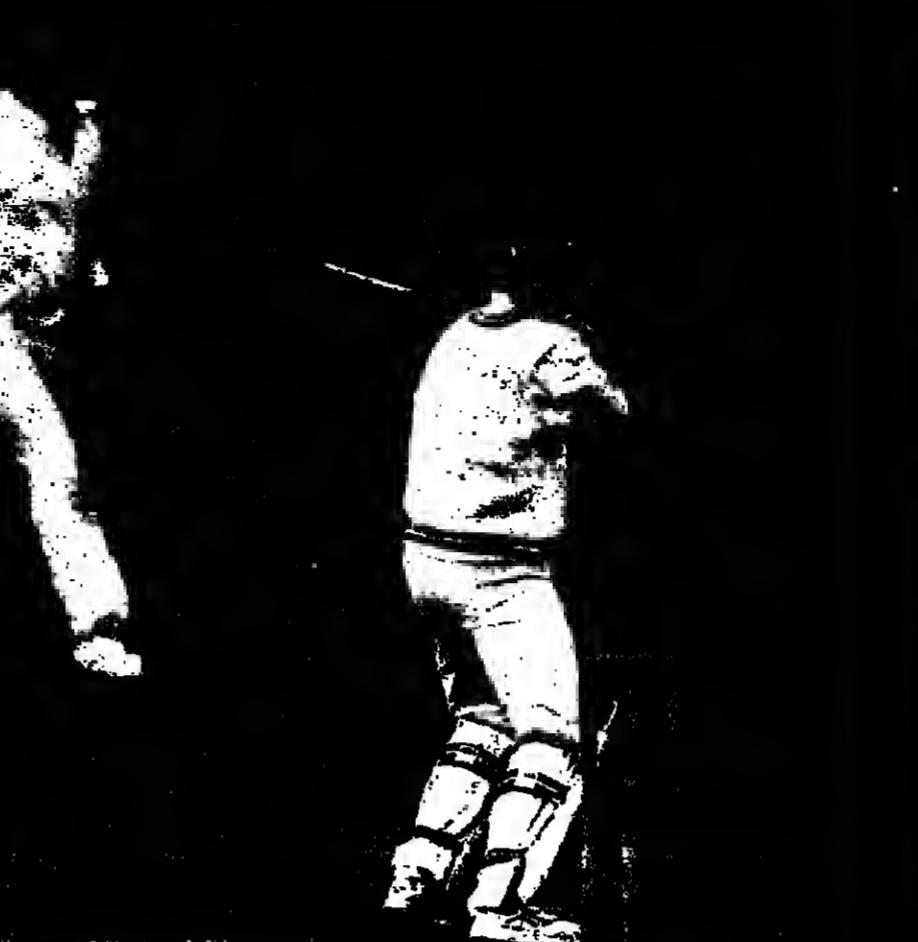
There was a typical Yorkshire pragmatism to Grayson's approach, and he could not be tempted, as was Prichard earlier in the day, to have a swing at the occasional bad ball. A measure of that willpower lies in the fact that only six of the 209 balls Grayson has faced have been dispatched to the boundary. In contrast, when Prichard went to punish a Robert Croft long-hop he was comfortably held by Steve James at deep square leg, two balls after reaching his 50.

Hussain persisted just after lunch, trying to work a delivery from Steve Watkin to leg and losing his middle and off stumps. He too had only just passed his half-century.

For a while Irfan carried the fight to the enemy. Unfortunately for him, Wagar Younis had returned to the fray, and he delivered a wicked, full-length ball which bowled the all-rounder. Wagar struck again a couple of overs later, with an unplayable yorker thudding into the base of Danny Law's stumps, and it looked as though Glamorgan would have a nominal total to knock off.

Grayson disagreed. He and Barry Hyam put on 62 for the seventh wicket and, even when Mark Ilott was bowled by off-spinner Croft, Ashley Cowan stuck around to the close. It is not all over yet.

Sussex fared far better second time around thanks to



Yorkshire's Michael Vaughan almost chops an Alan Iglesden delivery on to his stumps at Headington. Photograph: Empics

## Peirce's century sets target

### Round-up

Toby Peirce's maiden century helped Sussex set Hampshire a winning target of 260 at Southampton yesterday. Peirce batted five-and-a-half hours for his 104 as Sussex attempted to recover from a disastrous first-innings performance when they were bowled out for 114.

Sussex fared far better second time around thanks to

Peirce and some solid tail-end resistance and were all out for 390. This left Hampshire a whole day, plus 13 overs, to reach their target and by the close of the third day they were 37 without loss.

Worcestershire's victory charge was built up by an unbeaten ninth-wicket stand between Derbyshire's Karl Krikken and Simon Lacey at New Road.

They put on a battling 70 to

lift their struggling side to a 33-run lead by the time they closed on 364 for 8 after following on 390. This left Hampshire a whole day, plus 13 overs, to reach their target and by the close of the third day they were 37 without loss.

Derbyshire's victory charge was built up by an unbeaten ninth-wicket stand between Derbyshire's Karl Krikken and Simon Lacey at New Road.

Barnett. Tweats was finally removed for a Championship best 83, which contained 15 fours off 132 balls. His previous highest score in the competition had been 78 not out against Worcestershire at Kidderminster two years ago.

Barnett stroked 68, including 17 fours off 161 deliveries before he became the second of two victims in the space of four deadly deliveries from the accurate Hick.

The visitors did well to keep Worcestershire at bay and were particularly grateful for a determined 156-run fourth-wicket stand spanning 43 overs between Tim Tweats and Kim

Peirce. The latter's maiden century helped Sussex set Hampshire a winning target of 260 at Southampton yesterday. Peirce batted five-and-a-half hours for his 104 as Sussex attempted to recover from a disastrous first-innings performance when they were bowled out for 114.

Sussex fared far better second time around thanks to

of talented individuals who began the season with serious designs on the Championship title.

Their bowling on the first two days was a disgrace, and their batting has been slightly worse.

With such an exciting lead to the Championship brewing, it would be appalling if Surrey were to

surrender to Kent at Canterbury in their last game as they have just done against Lancashire.

Starting the day 338 runs behind, Surrey's 254 for 7, they had no chance of avoiding the follow-on

but pride should have dictated that the last three wickets should hold up Lancashire for as long as possible. But in the very first over Ian Salisbury, who has had a dreadful game, chopped Peter Martin's fourth ball into his stumps and Joey Edwards edged the sixth to first slip.

Pride did not dictate very

much more in the second innings either. Darren Bicknell was immediately lbw playing across the line at Martin, but then Mark

Butter and Jason Ratcliffe edged the sixth to first slip.

The visitors did well to keep

Worcestershire at bay and were particularly grateful for a determined 156-run fourth-wicket stand spanning 43 overs between Tim Tweats and Kim

Buckingham down to it for a while, adding 8 before Butcher was lbw coming forward and playing no stroke at Mike Watkinson.

A storm at lunch claimed 13 overs and as soon as play restarted Alex Stewart tried to pull a long hop from Watkinson, missed and was lbw. Alastair Brown threatened to restore some order but in the first over after tea he square-cut another Watkinson long hop to backward point.

The Hollibokes were as patriotic as anyone. Adam drove

over a straight half-volley and Ben pushed with firm wrists at one which Gary Keedy (orthodox left-arm spin) turned and was caught at slip. In view of the faith shown in them both by the selectors, these two should be performing. When Ratcliffe, whose determination was impressive, was bowled round his legs sweeping at Keedy when 10 runs short of his hundred, that was effectively that. Keedy's steady bowing brought him six wickets in the innings and 10 in the match.

### CRICKET SCOREBOARD

**HAMPSHIRE - Second Innings**  
Fell (cont): 5-123, 7-182, 8-179, 9-207.  
Bowling: Fraser, 14-7-24-0; Hewitt, 15-1-67-0; Tufnell, 32-1-6-61-5; Kallis, 15-5-39-2; Bloomfield, 4-1-12-0; Rampersad, 1-0-0-0; Hutton, 1-0-0-0.

**SCORING** (cont): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**Southampton** (cont): 6-100, 7-100, 8-100.

**DURHAM - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**DURHAM - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**DERBYSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**DERBYSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**ESSEX - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**ESSEX - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**KENT - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**KENT - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**LANCASHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**LANCASHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**LEICESTERSHIRE - First Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**LEICESTERSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**NOTTINGHAMSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**OXFORDSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**OXFORDSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**SHROPSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**SHROPSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**SUSSEX - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**SUSSEX - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**WARWICKSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WARWICKSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**WEST YORKSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WEST YORKSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**WORCESTERSHIRE - First Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Second Innings** (Overnight): 2-100, 3-100, 4-100, 5-100.

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Third Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Fourth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Fifth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Sixth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Seventh Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Eighth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Ninth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Tenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Eleventh Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Twelfth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Thirteenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Fourteenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Fifteenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Sixteenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Seventeenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Eighteenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Nineteenth Innings** 230 U.E Morris

**WORCESTERSHIRE - Twentieth Innings** 230 U.E Morris</p

## sport

# Keast unravels the Harlequins enigma

**Chris Hewett** on how a coach is restoring order at the Stoop after the upheavals of last spring

**W**hat is it with Harlequins, exactly? If the highest of high rollers are not quite the lowest of low achievers, their reputation as the head-spirited enigma of the English game has been earned a hundred times over. Talented they may be, but one good puff can still blow the Stoop Memorial Ground clean off its foundations. As one rugged Bath forward of fairly recent vintage put it: "Look at those shirts they pounce around in. Every colour under the sun except the one that sums them up. Yellow."

Quite how successful Andy Keast, Quins' new director of rugby and one of English coaching's brighter young things, will be in applying some backbone to all that soft tissue is one of the most intriguing aspects of the campaign. Of Square Eyes, as he is affectionately known, after spending countless man hours compiling video analysis for the Lions during their summer trek through South Africa, has already seen his dissolute charges at their most indisciplined and the experience driven him back in front of the small screen this week for a merciless dissection of his side's half-baked performance against Munster in last Sunday's Heineken Cup opener.

"It's the only way," he sighs. "I came back from South Africa never wanting to watch a video again — I would go days, quite literally, without seeing some of the Lions because my time was divided between sleeping, eating and analysing — but it's important to confront players with their own shortcomings. We gave Munster 20-odd points in missed tackles and allowed the Irish pimple to become a rash, so I sat everyone down in front of the tape and we spent two and a half hours discussing it. If they didn't realise before that they'd let themselves down, they realise it now."

To rugby folk outside the leafy suburbs of south-west London, the Quins job is the most toxic of poisoned chalices. Many of the big names have egos in match, the swank city slicker image raises the hackles of hard-hitten provincials to



Hands on: Andy Keast (centre), Harlequins' new young director of rugby, oversees training at the Stoop Memorial ground

such an altitude that they snort fire at the merest glimpse of Will Carling and the superb spectator facilities are too often betrayed by a lack of... well, spectators.

To make matters worse from Keast's point of view, he inherited a workforce in open revolt. Player power had accounted for his predecessor and partner, the abrasive former England coach Dick Best, and speculation was rife that Jason Leonard, the king-pin international prop, had seen enough and was hot-footing it across the Thames to Saracens.

"Things happened, obviously," Keast agrees. "Look, I'm a good mate of Dick's and he had the right vision for the club and was moving it in the only realistic direction available in a professional sport. Some of the changes he wanted to introduce — daytime training, for instance — are now up and running.

Quite honestly, I would like to have continued working with him, but in the end I was asked to take on the job and well, I've got a family to feed.

"As for Jason, he's going nowhere. We've had requests and there has been a lot of big-money transfer talk, but this is not just any old Quin we're talking about but a Quin through and through. I'm glad about it, too. I wouldn't like to coach a side that didn't have him there in the front row because he offers things in terms of knowledge and heart and enthusiasm that others couldn't hope to offer in a month of Sundays."

"Things happened, obviously," Keast agrees. "Look, I'm a good mate of Dick's and he had the right vision for the club and was moving it in the only realistic direction available in a professional sport. Some of the changes he wanted to introduce — daytime training, for instance — are now up and running.

Keast believes he has been more than accommodating towards the part-timers. That leaves just two senior staff, Jim Staples and Alex Snow, on the part-time list — precisely the kind of professionalisation Best was seeking when he ran into such stern opposition towards the end of last season.

"No-one twisted any arms," Keast insists. "The decision to change came from the players themselves and now they are into this different cycle of life, they're loving every minute of it. It's the way things are going and, while it won't happen immediately, the long-term implications are that those who do not feel able to commit themselves on a full-time basis will be left behind."

Snow, a successful equities broker, is deeply unsettled at Quins and his departure would leave an awkward gap in the Stoop's second row stable, but

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## Woodward wanted by Bath and England

Clive Woodward's installation as the new England coach is still subject to negotiation but the Rugby Football Union expects to link him and the manager, Roger Utley, with the 77 players at next Wednesday's squad session.

The RFU will not yet confirm the identities of the management team to succeed former coach Jack Rowell's panel while talks continue, but it has been discussing the terms of Woodward's release from his position on Bath's coaching staff.

Bath's chief executive, Tony Swift, was annoyed that the RFU first approached Woodward without going through the club, who will receive substantial compensation for the loss of Woodward, even though he has no formal contract with them.

Don Rutherford, the RFU rugby director, said: "It's not as easy as in the old days when you simply asked the best man to take on the job and he slipped effortlessly in. Now obligations to clubs and employment conditions make these appointments more complicated."

Fran Cotton, the powerful vice-chairman (playing) of the RFU Management Board, insists the coaching job must be full-time. This gives Woodward no chance of staging his three coaching sessions per week at Bath and watching only them on Saturdays.

The RFU is now two weeks behind schedule, having postponed the announcement of England's World Cup management team last month. Without selection, Rutherford was forced to invite a huge squad, but further disruption to the build-up to the four Tests before Christmas can be avoided if Woodward and Utley can be purposed at Bath Abbey next week.

English Rugby Partnership has announced that its chief executive Kim Deshayes is to quit his high-profile post at the end of this year. Deshayes, a key player in thrashing out agreement between England's top clubs and the Rugby Football Union following months of bitter argument over running the professional game, will pursue other business interests.

"I am pleased to have helped create the right structure and commercial framework to secure the future health and prosperity of England's professional club game into the next century," he said. "I feel that the time is now right to pass the baton to a successor who will take the top clubs through the next stage of their development."

Deshayes headed ERP, the joint company formed by top professional clubs and Twickenham, having previously run EPRU (English Professional Rugby Union Clubs). He also oversaw ERP's signing of a £22.5m television deal with BSkyB and helped negotiate Allied Dunbar's new three-year £1.2m backing for league rugby.

The ERP chairman Donald Kerr added: "The ERP board would like to thank Kim for the major contribution he has made to putting us on the right road for the future."

The Welsh contingent face a testing 48 hours. Cardiff and Swansea are desperate for home wins over Munster and Ulster respectively. Pontypridd travel to Brive, the champions from France who are unbeaten in eight Heineken Cup outings, while Llanelli pay an unenviable visit to Pau without two of their Test backs, Nigel Davies and Wayne Procter.

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• ST LEGER: The Derby runner up is taken to reverse Great Voltigeur Stakes placings with Stowaway in the world's oldest Classic

## Patriarch can have the final word

RICHARD EDMONDSON

Such has been the Arab domination in the recent history of the St Leger that it would be no surprise if the traditional baggy cap awarded to the winning jockey is replaced by a feather today's 221st running of the world's oldest Classic.

If there is sand in the bottom of the old trophy it will be because it has been an adornment in Sheikh Mohammed's home for the last three years. Shantou and Moonax have scored in his personal maroon and white colours, sandwiching Classic Cliche's victory for the Godolphin enterprise. Now there may be another for the Royal blues in the shape of Stowaway.

The colt's latest success in the Great Voltigeur Stakes appears to be the key exhibit in the Leg case. Godolphin assess the evidence as proving that their horse will again finish in front of Silver Patriarch, whom he beat a length that day. The grey's camp offer a different analysis.

"He can definitely overturn the Great Voltigeur form because I had a hold-up in his work before that race," John Dunlop, Silver Patriarch's trainer, said yesterday. "The horse came and won the race and then just got tired. He was a gallop short and in need of the race and I have every hope of jiving the tables tomorrow."

Simon Crisford, Godolphin's racing manager, might refer to that dissection as 'tosh'. "Silver Patriarch is a silver shadow that's always there, but we haven't got to the bottom of Stowaway by any means, and be

is such a progressive horse that we are very hopeful," he said. "We believe he has a first-rate chance of confirming the placings with Silver Patriarch."

Godolphin have denied that their *Haltara* is a pacemaker, though if there is a drawle he will make the running, which means he is a pacemaker. What-

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Silver Patriarch.  
(Doncaster 3.40)  
NR: Desert Story  
(Goodwood 2.45)

ever the method, be will not win. Indeed, there are several odd-ups in the field who have little chance. This corps seems to include Shaya, a final classic runner for the incomparable Dick Hem, who has won six Legers.

It is difficult to look outside the big two for the winter. It was this race two years ago which provided Frankie Dettori, Stowaway's rider, with his 1,000th domestic winner and by a statistical caprice it may be

such a progressive horse that is Vertical Speed, who was supplemented for £18,000, which is about what his owner, Daniel Wildenstein, pays for an easel. The Parisian art dealer won the 200th running of this race with Crow and has another chance now with an unbeaten colt who provides Olivier Peslier with his first ride in the Classic.

Vertical Speed is not guaranteed to perform to his best on today's good to firm ground, and a line through Book At Bedtime makes him barely a better horse than Windsor Castle, who is thus the best each-way shot.

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If the St Leger is the day's focus it can hardly be argued that its field contains the best horse. That honour belongs to Leopoldstown's Champion Stakes, in which Pissikots takes on Desert King, one of three Aidan O'Brien entries. Victory for the former will mean he has won Group One races in four countries following successes in Germany, Canada and England.

France hardly suffers by comparison either this weekend, with its medley of Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe trials at Longchamp tomorrow. Heliosio warmed up before winning last

year's Arc in the Prix Nicl, a race which now features a strong contest for next month's honours in Peintre Celebre. Michael Bell saddles Ivan Luis, who should at least get close to the favourite in the parade ring.

There is a considerable British entry for the Prix Vermeille, in which John Dunlop is represented by Dusty Dancer and Luca Cumani will be the favourite in the parade ring.

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**GOODWOOD**  
2.15 With Tregaron and Waypoint requiring a faster surface, Tumbleweed Ridge out of form and Showboat with plenty to prove, this may go to LAW COMMISSION, who has gone close to winning his last two races and seems to act on any ground. Craigievar, who likes to run on sand, could return to form after a couple of fruitless French trips.

2.45 A closely matched bunch and GREEN CARD is only marginally preferred. Held by Desert Story on 2,000 Guineas form - and by Amil Aldeba - Keenjin running behind Among Men - he has more scope for progress than that pair and, although untried on easy ground, is bred to act on soft.

3.20 Sheep Pearl and Double Oscar are at the top of their form and No Extra and Green Card on this track, with YOUNDONTSAVAN, a good horse to form last time, will like this easy ground and has a useful apprentice taking weight off.

**DONCASTER**

3.35 STANTON HARDCOURT, who landed a third handicap by half a length over a mile at Newmarket in July, has not run since but remains on a lenient handicap mark. Restructure, who ran as if he really needs today's trip of a mile nowadays when three lengths fourth to Swiss Law over 7f at Goodwood last time, is the danger.

**HYPERION'S**

**SILVER PATRIARCH**, who possibly needed the race - his first since he disappointed in the Irish Derby, when half a length second to Stowaway (a doubtful stayer) in the Great St Leger Stakes at York, can turn the tables over this longer trip. The selection, beaten just a short-head by Benny The Dip in the Derby, is the classic contender on that form. Vertical Speed has more to do than when notching his hat-trick in France while the only other certain stayer - Panama City, Windsor Castle and Book At Bedtime - do not look good enough.

**TITANIC**, a dismal 7f-length sixth to Bay Prince in the Roxes Stakes over 5f at York, is capable of better than that and in any case does not appear to face as harsh a task here.

**SONG OF FREEDOM**, who disappointed at Sandown last time, looks well handicapped on the form he showed to beat Ball Purse a neck in a 1m 2f handicap Newbury in August and could bounce back to form here.

## Daggers drift down

GREG WOOD

reports from Doncaster

The mysterious forces which govern ante-post betting were in evidence at Doncaster yesterday, as the winner of the season's best two-year-old event immediately drifted in the lists for next year's 2,000 Guineas, while a horse who was standing in his box 200 miles away moved in the other direction.

**DAGGERS DRAWN** set off as the 4-6 favourite for the Champagne Stakes, so his victory was hardly unexpected, but a half-length defeat of Docksider was hardly the procession which many punters had turned up to enjoy. Those who have already taken a short price for the 1998 Guineas will console themselves with the thought that, when asked to quicken from a less than promising position, Daggers Drawn responded de-

cisively. Once ahead, however, he did not go clear, unlike Central Park, who quickly put five lengths between himself and Docksider when winning Goodwood's Richmond Stakes.

Thus it was Central Park who accelerated towards the top of the Classic betting with most bookmakers, and Paul Cole's colt is now as short-as-7f from the Totie. Only Ladbrokes refused to budge, leaving Central Park on 14-1, with

one who seems to be the best for Stanhope Harcourt so far fifth to Memorise or Newmarket (2m) and the more commendable Whinnys galore have come from that race, notably Maybole, Arystea and Marston, and Stanhope Harcourt is going to have to beat all that.

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## sport

# Man who swapped a building site for the Madrid cauldron

**Glenn Moore** meets Leicester City's Matt Elliott, whose rise from football's twilight zone reaches a new landmark in the Uefa Cup on Tuesday

**S**o what's it all about," asks the player. "Well, each week we do a major football interview, so far we've done Marc Overmars, Alex Ferguson, Ruud Gullit, Chris Waddle," replies the reporter.

Matt Elliott looks impressed, then asks with a hint of false modesty: "So why are you talking to me, then?"

At 28 Elliott has come late to the fame game and, like his Leicester City team-mates, he is not taking it for granted. The reason we met in a hotel on the outskirts of Leicester this week was that he has already had a more interesting career than most and it is about to enter a new dimension.

Yesterday Leicester fly to Spain for their first round first leg tie against Atletico Madrid. It is arguably the most daunting fixture in the competition – Atletico, Spanish double winners 18 months ago, spent £23.5m in the summer on Christian Vieri and Juninho alone. Leicester spent £1.4m.

This is not what was predicted for Elliott or Leicester a year ago. He was playing for Oxford United in the Nationwide League and City were being tipped for relegation from the Premiership. Leicester then paid £1.6m for Elliott and not only stayed up but also won the Coca-Cola Cup (for which he was cup-tied) to gain Uefa Cup entry.

"I've been to Spain like most people but never to the capital," Elliott said. "I'm told it's a 60,000-all-seater, so it should be quite an atmosphere. We've got three or four players with international experience, and

some with European experience, but for the majority it will be a new situation. We know it is under no illusions. We know it is going to be a really tough game but it will be another chapter in Leicester's recent history if we did pull off a result."

To show those European virginities, like Elliott, what to expect, Martin O'Neill took Leicester to Greece for a match with Olympiakos. "It was supposed to be a pre-season friendly and we found 20,000 mad Greeks spitting and swearing at you, waving banners about Satan and the devil. We thought 'hang on a minute', but we'll probably get that in Madrid to an extent, so it was good experience."

It is certainly a long way from Torquay and Scunthorpe, where Elliott spent his formative football years – and even further from the building site he found himself on, having rejected the chance of a professional career as a schoolboy.

"I thought the chance of playing at this level had passed me by," he admitted. "I was quite surprised and relieved that Martin O'Neill came in for me. It was quite a lot of money for someone of my age and my experience – the level I had played at."

Elliott moved towards cricket, playing in the same Surrey schools side as Graham Thorpe but continued playing football and, after leaving school and becoming a labourer, joined his local non-League club Epsom & Ewell. At 19 he was spotted by Jimmy Hendrie, the Charlton physiotherapist. "He thought I had some potential and with a bit of coaching might be decent. Lennie Lawrence was kind enough to give me a year's contract but I was never really part of the set-up. I wasn't good enough. They were in the

old First Division and had Tommy Caton, Peter Shilton and Colin Pates. I played one game in the League Cup, then he loaned me to Torquay."

Elliott signed for Torquay and began playing regularly, but admits the distractions of a holiday town were too tempting for a young pro fresh away

from home. "I really enjoyed my time there but did not concentrate on my game as much as I should have. I couldn't believe I'd become a professional footballer and I enjoyed the other side of it. I realised I needed a change, a move away from the distractions."

At 23 he moved to Scunthorpe for £50,000 and came under

the tuition of Bill Green, the former Carlisle and West Ham centre-half. "He said: 'All I want you to do is head it. I thought: 'Well, OK, but a lot of people can just head it'. I wanted to prove, not just to him, that I could do a bit more than that. He trusted me to further myself like that and Denis Smith (who

now is under Martin O'Neill's wing. "He has his own style, which is different to anything I've encountered. Sometimes he won't come out training for a week, he'll leave it to Steve Walford and John Robertson. The next week he'll come in every day and analyse you. He's very intelligent and doesn't let you get away with anything. You will do something in a match and think you've got away with it, that no-one's noticed, and he'll suddenly pick you up on it in a team-talk."

Shades, inevitably, of Brian Clough here, as with the early departure for Madrid (most teams leave the day before European games), Clough's motivational techniques also appear to have rubbed off on O'Neill. The Leicester manager, says Elliott, is both a brolcker and an arm-around-the-shoulder manager.

"What do you prefer?" I ask naively. "Not being shouted at," comes the reply, to a barely concealed snort from the photographer.

The question which should have been asked – "what works best with you?" – is then put. "Sensible, constructive criticism. I'll hold my hands up if I've made a mistake – some players will complain until they're blue in the face rather than admit they're wrong. The over-riding thing for me is his passion. He doesn't try to hide it, everyone has seen him on the touchline in games. He is very intense on match-days, players realise how much he wants to succeed. He's not obsessive, he's passionate, but he'll talk as long as you like about football."

O'Neill has created a team of similar desire. Elliott admits that during the summer he wondered whether the club could maintain last year's standards but the consistency of performance last season, and early wins over Aston Villa and at Liverpool, quelled any doubts.

Leicester, who host Tottenham today, have also drawn with Manchester United and Arsenal, results which Atletico will have noticed admiringly.

"We're not particularly close outside football but we all seem to get on well, there's no backbiting," Elliott said. "The manager and staff instill how hard we have to work. If we win two games, they say 'don't think you're something you're not'."

Elliott, married to Catherine with two young children, Jade and Charlie, is keeping his own feet on the ground. Such has been his impact at Filbert Street the prospect of international honours has been mentioned. "I think they are getting a bit carried away," he said. "It would be lovely but I don't really think about it."

He has played at Wembley – two play-offs and a Sherpa Van Trophy final – and won promotion. Now, he says, "my ambition is to win some honours. The league might be pushing it, but why not Leicester for the FA Cup? I think players who come the long way up appreciate it. At the end of my career I want to have no regrets, to have achieved what I can and enjoyed it whatever happens."

## Smith backs Gascoigne

### SCOTTISH LEAGUE

continues that form against Aberdeen," he said. "We are looking to build on our good start in the league. Aberdeen tend to raise their game against us and we know we will have to work exceptionally hard."

Celtic travel to Motherwell with Marc Rieper due to make his debut after completing his £1.5m move from West Ham yesterday. Another Dane, Morten Wieghorst, returns to the Celtic squad after his mid-week international duty. Gascoigne was outstanding in the 4-0 defeat of Moldova and the Rangers manager, Walter Smith, will settle for a repeat performance. "If Gazza is playing well, he will make a difference to any side. I just hope he

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### MAJOR WEEKEND FOOTBALL FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY	P W D L F A Pts					
3.0 unless stated						
<b>FA Carling Premiership</b>						
Blackburn 5 4 1 0 15 4 13						
Man Utd 5 4 1 0 15 4 13						
West Ham 5 3 1 1 10 4 12						
Charlton 4 5 2 3 11 5 9						
Arsenal 4 5 2 3 11 5 9						
Leicester 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Tottenham 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Nottingham Forest 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Crystal Palace 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Sheffield Wednesday 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Barnsley 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Leeds 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Everton 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Leicester 5 2 2 1 6 5 6						
Sheff Wed 5 1 0 3 2 8 13						
Derby 5 1 0 2 1 2 8 13						
Bolton 5 1 0 2 1 2 8 13						
Southampton 5 1 0 2 1 2 8 13						
Wimbledon 5 1 0 2 1 2 8 13						
1. Arsenal v Bolton ...						
2. Barnsley v Aston Villa ...						
3. Coventry v Southampton ...						
4. Crystal Palace v Chelsea ...						
5. Derby v Everton ...						
6. Leicester v Tottenham ...						
<b>National Football League First Division</b>						
10. Bradford City v Middlesbrough ...						
11. Huddersfield v Ipswich ...						
12. Norwich v Port Vale ...						
13. Portsmouth v Crewe ...						
14. QPR v West Bromwich ...						
15. Reading v Oxford Utd ...						
16. Sheffield Utd v Notts Forest ...						
17. Stoke v Stockport ...						
18. Swindon v Tranmere ...						
19. Wolves v Charlton ...						
<b>Second Division</b>						
20. Bournemouth v Luton ...						
21. Bristol Rovers v Nottingham ...						
22. Fulham v Grimsby ...						
23. Middlesbrough v Southend ...						
24. Oldham v Northampton ...						
25. Plymouth v Bradford ...						
26. Preston v Walsall ...						
27. Warrington v Chesterfield ...						
28. Wigan v Blackpool ...						
<b>Third Division</b>						
– Brighton v Darlington ...						
32. Cambridge Utd v Barnet ...						
33. Cardiff v Rochdale ...						
34. Chester v Shrewsbury ...						
35. Hartlepool v Torquay ...						
36. Hull v Lincoln ...						
37. Leyton Orient v Exeter ...						
38. Macclesfield v Swindon ...						

## Buxton to keep China on course

### Football

TOMMY STANIFORTH

China's English coach, Ted Buxton, is confident his side are on course for France 98 – despite a tough World Cup qualifying match against one of the Asian favourites, Iran, today.

Buxton was an assistant to Terry Venables when he was the England coach, said a dramatic change had come over China in the nine months he had been with them. They have improved in nearly area on the field. It has been beyond my expectations. You can see it in China's world ranking which has shot up thirty places."

Buxton was brought in as a consultant with the former England goalkeeper, Jimmy Rimmer, last year for the World Cup qualifying tournament. "Nine months ago I thought it would be a miracle for them to get through. Now I think they have a very good chance of winning one of Asia's automatic qualifying places."

The winners from the two Asian groups will qualify automatically for the finals and the two second-placed teams will play off for a third spot. The loser of the play-off will play Australia, where Venables is now in charge, for a fourth place.

"I speak to Terry nearly every day and I think he is a hit worried now. He keeps asking me about the Chinese players and I say: 'You tell me about the Australians,'" Buxton said. Venables had received special reports on China's record tour of England for matches against

Premiership sides, which Buxton described as hugely beneficial. "Our defence has improved a lot and now I think there are four or five players that could make the grade in the Premiership," he added.

The Dalian stadium in Peking will be packed today and, for the first time, fans will be coming from all around China for the match, with special transport laid on from all over the country.

To the United States, the country's first women's professional soccer league will kick off next year with the hope of building on the success of the States' gold medal performance at the Atlanta Olympics.

The formation of the eight-team league, the National Soccer Alliance (NSA), was announced on Thursday by the League's Development Consultant, Jennifer Rottenberg.

The league, which will feature US international players, college graduates and some foreign players, will play a 20-game season from 17 April to 21 June with a championship to be played on 4 July.

Tisha Venturini, a member of the US national team and one of 18 American players who will play in the NSA, said: "Other countries have [woman's] leagues going on there; they get an edge on us every day."

The original eight teams will be based in Seattle, Raleigh, North Carolina, San Jose, California; Fullerton, California; Piscataway, New Jersey; Bethesda, Maryland; the Boston area; and in Duncanville, a suburb of Dallas.

## Easter Road ruled out

Scotland's vital World Cup qualifier on 11 October against Latvia has been switched to Celtic Park from Easter Road.

The Scottish Football Association moved swiftly to change the venue after it became apparent that Craig Brown's team will almost certainly qualify for the finals in France if they secure the three points.

There was a growing clamour to move the game away from Edinburgh in view of the importance of the game, as Hibernal's capacity is only just

over 16,000. Celtic's stadium can hold three times as many, and should be full to capacity on what could be a momentous day for Scottish football.

The SFA chief executive, Jim Farry, said: "I would like to express my thanks for the willing and helpful co-operation we have received in this matter from Fifa, Latvia, Hibs, Celtic and other parties in allowing the match to be moved." Hibernal, who had refused to give up the game last month, agreed when approached again yesterday.

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**Keast in control**  
Fancy dans Harlequins  
are toughening up, page 26

# sport

**The twilight zone**  
Matt Elliott's journey from  
building site to Madrid, page 28

Europe's best take the test at Burghley's dressage arena



Anita Nemtin of Hungary performs her dressage test on Caesar in the European Three-Day Event Championships at Burghley yesterday Report, page 25. Photograph: David Ashdown

## Elite aim for a happy return

The Premiership? No, don't tell me, the name rings a bell. It'll come to me.

So much has happened, the nation has been so thoroughly and sadly diverted, since the last time England's elite football clubs took to the field, the Premiership has been neglected to the point of forgetfulness. All of a sudden Keith Burkinshaw's words "There used to be a football club over there" has become a jog in the memory as well as a philosophical point.

It has not quite got to the stage on Tyneside where old codgers take young boys to St James' Park and say "In my day they used to play League football," but it would be easy for the Toon Army to think the season is passing them by. Newcastle have the only 100 per cent record in England, but as they have managed to shoehorn in only two home Premiership matches in the five weeks since the opening day the achievement is devalued somewhat.

"It feels like two months since the season started," Ter-

ry McDermott, Newcastle's assistant manager, said. "It's a hit to have only played two Premiership games. But we're undefeated, in the pack, and if we could string a few wins together now we'd be right up there with three games in hand."

It sounds good on paper but if any team has been designed to bring reality with them on the coach it is Wimbledon, who are smarting for two reasons. A reward of two points from four matches is one, the other is a controversial match at St James' Park last season when they had a perfectly good equaliser overruled. On that occasion their manager Joe Kinnear suggested the baying crowd had as much influence on the officials' decision as football's laws.

Ironically, given the stop-start character to date, the biggest influence today might be fatigue as England's polyglot players reassemble from all parts of the world. Last time international commitments intruded on the programme Newcastle had to do

After 12 days' break the Premiership returns today. Guy Hodgson looks forward to the resumption of hostilities

without Faustino Asprilla, who failed to get back from Colombia in time, while Manchester United and Blackburn Rovers dropped their only points of the season.

That could be a coincidence – Chelsea's league of nations walloped Barnsley 6-0 that same weekend – but the theme of tiredness will be a recurring one as player resources are stretched from Barnsley to Barcelona. Chelsea's player-manager, Ruud Gullit, summed up the mood of more than one manager when he described the situation as "frustrating".

"When the players come back they can't train properly," he said. "You don't get them back until Thursday and you've got the next game on Saturday. You can't work on anything tactically when they're together for two days." Any Chelsea tactical shortcomings will be ex-

posed at Selhurst Park by Crystal Palace, who, unlike Gullit, have only one Italian to choose from after failing to sign Giuseppe Signori from Lazio.

Five Manchester United players figured in England's win over Moldova on Wednesday and it could have been six if Teddy Sheringham had been fit. The £3.5m striker will also miss today's match at home to West Ham, although Ronny Johnson should return to a defence that has yet to concede a goal.

"He needs to get a game before we start our European campaign," Alex Ferguson, whose side meet Kosice in Slovakia in the Champions' League on Wednesday.

Liverpool might include Oyvind Leonhardsen for his first game since his £3.5m transfer from Wimbledon and if the Norwegian needs any reminder

that a big fee might not lead to a big future at Anfield he will need only to look across the field to the Sheffield Wednesday opponents.

Nigel Clough arrived at Liverpool as "the new Kenny Dalglish" and departed the equivalent of Paul Stewart, and it is a measure of his decline that he cannot now get a first-team place at Manchester City. A loan to Wednesday might in, his new manager David Pleat's words, "give him a chance to remind people of his talent".

Coventry will not have forgotten Kevin Richardson's talents, but will get an instant reminder because he returns to Highfield Road just three days after being sold to Southampton. He left as surplus to requirements, he returns as captain.

Bolton travel to Arsenal

aware that this match will put their bright start into proper perspective. "This will be our biggest test to date," their manager, Colin Todd, said. "We have surprised a lot of people and we

want to show how good a side we can be."

So do both Barrow and Ashton Villa, who meet at Oakwell with a the whiff of concern in the air. A defeat for either side could define their season but a reverse would be felt particularly by Villa, who meet Bordeaux in the Uefa Cup on Tuesday.

In Blackburn, the Premiership leaders can watch the tiring European efforts with mixed emotions. They would like to be involved, too, but at least their players are not going to get fatigued. They meet Leeds at Elland Road tomorrow refreshed by the news that Roy Hodgson has won the manager of the month award for August. "He has already generated a renewed air of expectancy," a spokesman for the sponsors, Carling, said.

The player of the month was Arsenal's Dennis Bergkamp, who, given his fear of flying, will not want to be accused of generating an air of anything.

More football, pages 28 and 29

## Kent made to suffer with injuries

### Cricket

**DEREK PRINGLE**  
reports from Headingley  
Yorkshire 312 and 290-8  
Kent 374

	P	W	L	D	Set.	Inv.	Tot.
Kent (4)	15	7	4	4	39	52	220
Glamorgan (1D)	15	6	2	7	42	49	208
Yorkshire (2)	15	6	2	7	42	49	208
Warwickshire (1)	15	6	2	7	33	32	188
Middlesex (9)	15	6	2	7	28	45	188
Middlesex (9)	15	3	4	5	27	48	188

Points from current round: Kent: 8; Glamorgan: 8; Yorkshire: 7; Middlesex: 3.

• The match between Warwickshire (240) and Gloucestershire (141) has been delayed.

Winter tour in the West Indies. With Darren Gough straining a hamstring on Thursday, and Ashley Cowans suffering a chronic shoulder injury down in Cardiff, only Andy Caddick and Angus Fraser remain fit to work.

Ironically, it is Caddick, whose recent history of injuries would fill *The Lancet*, who may yet have a vital role to play in determining where the Championship pennant ends up, when Somerset play host to Glamorgan in the final round of matches next Thursday.

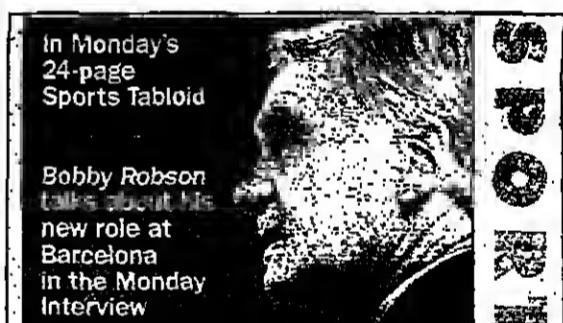
Meanwhile, at Headingley there is all to play for as a evenly contested match reaches its climax today. Yorkshire beginning the day and their second innings 62 runs in arrears, finished it 228 ahead, with two wickets in hand.

On a pitch now beginning to reveal its tickle nature and bounce, it was a superb effort and one that owed almost everything to their two imposing left-handers, Darren Lehmann (68) and David Byas (74).

If it was French cricket rather than the English version that was being played, Lehmann would surely be referred to in the best traditions of Franglais as Le Man. With 1,528 runs at an average of almost 67, he has been the outstanding batsman for Yorkshire this summer.

Confident that the pitch, despite its slowness will provide a stern test for Kent, Yorkshire threw the bat, losing six wickets – four of them to Mark Ealham before bad light brought a premature end to the day.

With both sides really needing to win, only prolonged showers, unfortunately forecast for today, can now make this game anything but riveting.



## Celtic capture £1.5m Rieper

**NICK DUXBURY**

Rieper, meanwhile, will be playing Motherwell.

The 29-year-old Rieper, who was not signed in time to play in the Glasgow club's seventh new arrival of the season as they attempt to break Rangers' stranglehold on Scottish football.

Ian Pearce has been told he can leave Blackburn Rovers but only if Crystal Palace pay £3m for the 23-year-old defender's services. Palace have made two offers, neither of which have matched Rovers' valuation.

Wolverhampton Wanderers have raided the GM Vauxhall Conference to pluck the 19-year-old striker Jason Roberts from Hayes for £250,000. Roberts is the nephew of Cyril Regis, the former England and West Bromwich Albion striker, who also began his career with Hayes.

"Roberts reminds me of Chris Armstrong. He obviously needs time to develop, but he is a very good prospect," Mark McGhee, the Wolves manager, said.

Nottingham County have escaped with a warning after an incident during last month's game against Lincoln City when the referee was allegedly assaulted by a spectator.

The Football Association has notified County that, after carrying out a full inquiry, it has decided not to take any further action.

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**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**

No. 3403 Saturday 13-September

By Spurius

**ACROSS**

- Scoring shot probably attributable to direct approach (8,5)
- It's worn regularly, all the same? (7)
- Sale involving us initially in legal process (7)
- After match, Yorkshire opener's irritable (5)
- Attempt to catch everyone connected with monarch's betrayal (9)
- Constable escorting knight around firm (5)
- Vote not to admit last one to leave table? (9)
- It was once held to improve vision (9)
- Lower teeth not characterised by this configuration? (3-2)
- A French dealer's new application to inhibit rusting (9)
- Material lining trouser generally? (5)
- Red coat fashioned in twenties style (3,4)
- Reasoning from cause to effect, produce endless disorder within one short month (1,6)
- Admonition which can be read in cave? (4,2,7)

**DOWN**

- Row after shirt gets crumpled in drier (9)
- Aun's companion is an absolute pain (5)
- Athenian character within gun's range (5)
- Business designation apt to make customers call? (9)
- Products of bakery in Gib? (4,5)
- Utter depravity surrounds head of organisation (5)
- Being ethnically diverse, hence harbouring various micro-organisms? (13)
- Reference book and funnily clay pipe-deacon left by piano (13)
- American culminate one's in communication with? (3-6)
- Comparatively affluent punter not hanging around? (6-3)
- Playing a nonet for the PM? (9)
- Italian tenor's opening note same as before? (5)
- Woollen cloth, American, everyone's got up in (5)
- Nurse takes care of Irish rock singer (5)

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**

Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford.

Back issues available from Heriot's Newspapers 01882 340370.

Sunday 13 September 1997 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive handwritten copies of the Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. The winner and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4013, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: J. Ridd, London; J. Parry, Didcot; P. Marlow, Leicester; E. Hart, West Harrow; H. Stevens, London NW7.

Editor: G. R. S. Williams. Assistant Editor: M. J. Williams. Art Editor: J. C. Williams. Design: J. C. Williams. Production: J. C. Williams. Typesetting: J. C. Williams. Illustration: J. C. Williams. Photography: J. C. Williams. Advertising: J. C. Williams. Classified: J. C. Williams. Circulation: J. C. Williams. Subscriptions: J. C. Williams. Postmaster: J. C. Williams. Copyright © 1997 The Independent Publishing Company Ltd. All rights reserved.



**IMAGE OF THE WEEK** The ayes had it. It seemed appropriate in the week that Scotland made its decision to establish its own parliament that we should find ourselves on Hadrian's Wall, the barrier between the marauding tribes. Photograph: Andrew Buurman. Taken with a Canon EOS 1, 17-35 mm zoom at f11, 125th of a second with Kodak multi-speed film. To order a print of this picture for £14, call 0171-293 2534



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 1997

## WORDS OF THE WEEK

John Updike's literary adventure into cyberspace is over. But how will the adventure of Miss Tasso Polk end?

**M**iss Tasso Polk at ten-tea alighted from the elevator oo to the olive tiles of the 19th floor only lightly naged by a sense of something wrong. *The Magazine's* crest, that great black M, the thing masculine that had most profoundly penetrated her life, echoed from its inland security the thoughtful humming in her mind: "m". There had heeo someone strange in the elevator. She had felt it all the way up. Strange, not merely unknown to her personally. Most of the world was unknown to her personally, but it was not strange. The men in little felt hats and oxblood shoes who performed services of salesmanship and accountancy and research and co-ordination for the firms (Simplex, Happitex, Techonitrex, Instant-Pix) that occupied the 17 floors beneath the sacred olive groves of *The Magazine* were anonymous and interchangeable to her but not strange. She could read right through the but-

ton-down collars of their unstarched shirts into the ugly neck-stretching of their morning shaves, right through the pink and watery whites of their eyes into last night's cocktail party to Westchester, Tarrytown, Rye, or Orange, right through their freckled, soft, broad-and-hrown bands into adulterous caresses that did not much disgust her, they were so distant and trivial and even, in their suburban distance from her, idyllic, like something satyre do on vases. Miss Polk was 43, and had given herself to *The Magazine* in the flower of her beauty.

*The contributors then take us on a convoluted saga of the suicide (or is it?) of the editor, Mr Merrivweather; a video message from the grave (perhaps); business rivalries; an attempt at hypnotism and kidnapped cats. And here is Laura Kane's penultimate chapter, in which an increasingly bemused Tasso Polk is about to discover the truth about Mr Merrivweather's death ...*

Levelling her gaze at Uncle James, Tasso Polk decided it was high time for the cards to be placed oo the table for all to see. Despite the crackle of danger she could sense in the air, she would be the first to lay a face card down. "I heard much more than that," she said, "thanks to dear old Mauser, who seems to be the only creature worthy of my trust." Her eyes shifted to the faces of the other two men: the stranger, Franklin Boyce, and her former lover, William Evermore. "I'm supposed to have seen a ghost somewhere, I believe, the ghost of Mr Merrivweather in the library of his house, hovering in front of the calfskin classics. Is that not so?" The men exchanged furtive glances as she continued.

"Now, I have no intention of going to the

police fo hysterics come morning; sorry to foil your little plan. As for the blasted key that you are all so eager to retrieve, I'm oot sur I recall where it is. Perhaps if I knew the truth behind this little drama of yours, I might remember."

Franklin Boyce was the first to break the silence. "My dear Miss Polk," he said in his accented tones, "it would be in your best interest to co-operate. Since it is oow evideot that you realise just how ceotral a character you are in this 'little drama', as you put it, you have just raised the stakes." He glanced pointedly at the body of Mr Merrivweather. "Ooc more dead body would hardly be a hurdeo, especially one as slight as yours."

Anger, rather than fear, flashed in her eyes. "Are you threatening me?"

"Tasso, please say nothing else!" pleaded Uncle James. "You don't know who you're dealing with!"

She turned her furious glare back to her Uncle. "And you! What part do you have in this charade? I doo't even know you any more!"

He was silent for a moment. Then he sighed deeply, tortuously. "You're right, Teacup," he said. "It's time you knew." He looked at the other men. "We must tell her. It's the only way."

For John Updike's final chapter contact: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## INSIDE

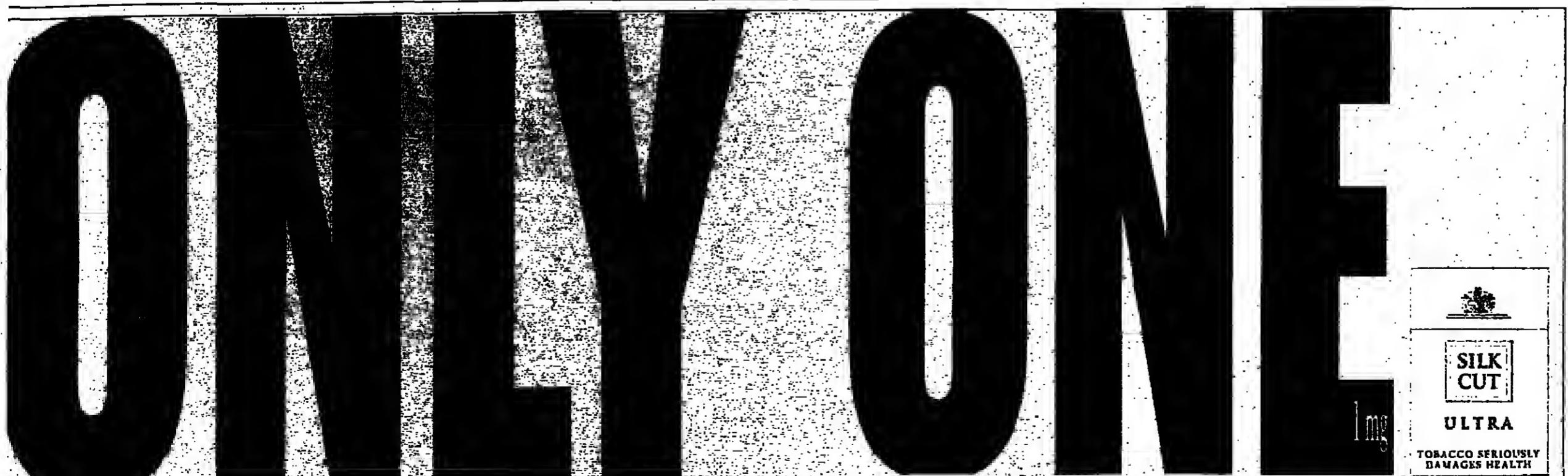
**John Walsh meets Andrew Davis**

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**Ralph McTell: escape from the Streets** page 4

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Chief Medical Officers' Warning  
1 mg Tar 0.1 mg Nicotine



TOBACCO SERIOUSLY DAMAGES HEALTH

An aerial view of Adrian Fisher's Windmill Maze at Willett's Farm, Frilford - rotate anti-clockwise through 90 degrees to see the windmill

Chris Maslanka guides us through the labyrinthine complexities of mazes, large and small

**M**azes turn up everywhere: in ancient myth, in prehistoric rock carvings in Sardinia, in Roman mosaics, in the cathedrals of Europe as well as English stately homes and more recently in fields of maize (mind the pun!) and even in the murals of Warren (as in rabbit) Street tube station in London.

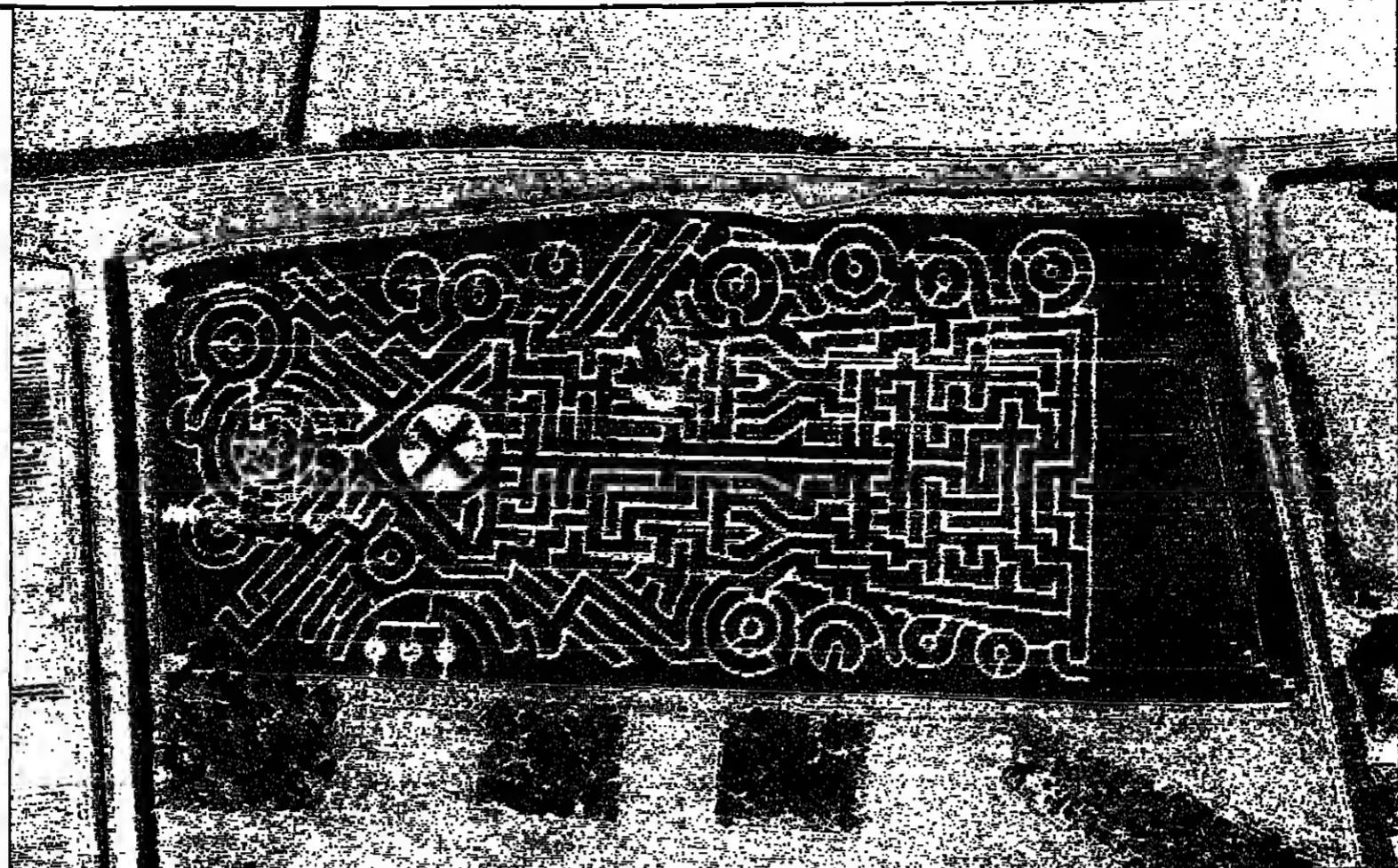
The most famous maze myth is undoubtedly that of Theseus and the Minotaur. King Minos of Crete, the story goes, enlisted the help of Daedalus (he of the waxen wings whose son suffered a drop in the ocean) in the construction of a labyrinth under his palace, so cunningly contrived that no one entering could hope to escape. In its corridors he lodged the Minotaur, a monster half man and half bull.

Athens regularly sent human sacrifices to this Minotaur by way of tribute to Crete. Theseus, determined to end this tyranny, threaded his way through the labyrinth unwinding as he went a clew of wool (whence the modern word "clue" meaning a guiding principle in problem-solving). This had been given to him by Minos's daughter Ariadne who had conveniently fallen in love with him on sight. After killing the beast Theseus was able to retrace his steps by rewinding the wool.

One does not need balls of wool to solve the classical labyrinth, a form found all over the ancient world, not only on coins from Knossos but also dotted about the Scandinavian coastline in stone labryinths bearing such suggestive names as Troytown and Jericho. Presumably its simplicity explains its ubiquity. Even a child could draw it, as ancient graffiti show.

These early mazes and labyrinths were not puzzle mazes. They generally had no branch points, so one could proceed from one end to the other, just by not stopping. Their purpose was symbolic and ritualistic. Until the turn of the century, for example, Nordic fisherman would ritually walk the stone labyrinths before putting to sea to fish.

As happens to all robust pagan customs, the maze was adopted and adapted by the Church. In Europe mazes were used to decorate cathedral interiors and symbolised pilgrimage and



## The amazing maze of maize

the road to salvation: keep your head down, stick to the right path and you'll get there. The English, less flamboyantly, cut turf mazes in the church ground. With the growth of formal gardens towards the end of the Renaissance, hedge mazes became popular for amusement and social ritual. Some were designed merely to be viewed as interesting patterns from balconies, others as promenades and means of pleasantly complicating walks.

However, it must not be supposed that mazes have only ritual and recreational functions. Psychologists place rodents and even earthworms in mazes to shed light on the process of learning. They have even shown that rats are as good as humans at maze-solving, which makes this type of problem a "species non-differentiating intelligence test". Even for non-carbon-based species, one might add, for students of artificial intelligence set logically programmed robotic mice to run mazes to test how well they find their way about and interpret their environment.

Mathematically speaking, the study of mazes is part of elementary topology ("the science of place") which deals not so much with size and angles but with connectivity (what joins on to what) and contiguity (what borders what). A

map of the London Underground is topological: it isn't a scale model of the network, but a diagram giving the order of stations on the various lines.

Having a map of a maze or its graph (analogous to a tube map, showing only the connections of the branch points) is useful only if you know where you are. But what if you've taken a wrong turning in a maze with no distinguishing marks, or if you have no map at all? Blundering about randomly like Jack Nicholson in *The Shining* may eventually work, but the bigger the maze the less advisable this approach, particularly since humans tend to repeat errors. There are rules to traverse mazes. These are particularly simple for "simply connected" mazes.

A "simply connected" maze is one all of whose walls are connected in one continuous - if meandering - sweep. Multiply connected mazes have detached portions of wall forming

islands not connected to the outer wall. If you keep one hand in contact with the wall of a simply connected maze as you walk you will traverse each corridor twice: once coming and once going. This is because such a maze consists of a single wall whose perimeter you are following just like a pencil drawing the outline on paper.

With multiply connected mazes the hand-on-wall routine will not take you round all of the maze, just those parts of it connected to your starting point. In general, it may not take you to your goal. Trémaux's method is designed to reach those parts that other methods cannot reach.

Why do mazes still fascinate us moderns? Partly because we live in an age of leisure but also because the timeless symbolism of the maze still holds good. Theseus's triumph over the Minotaur symbolises not just the shaking off of tyranny, but also the inroads

that science could make into the world. With so much twisting and turning in a small space we too can feel lost without going anywhere and insecure without being in danger. As in life so in the maze: we can be systematic or footloose and fancy free. There is still that same thrill that our goal may lie just around the next corner.

Much of the recent resurgence in interest in things labyrinthine is due to international maze designer Adrian Fisher, who organised the year of the maze in 1991. Thrice holder of the *Guinness Book of Records* title for the world's largest maze (1993, 1995 and 1996) Fisher has designed more than 135 mazes worldwide: hedge mazes, pavement mazes, water mazes and mirror mazes with themes as extravagant as Alien Abduction, Martian Exploration, Jurassic Park, and a Yellow Submarine. His designing the world's first maize maze in 1993 triggered a highly competitive maize maze craze in Canada, the USA, Britain and France.

Fisher's latest world record attempt is a Windmill Maze at Willett's Farm in Oxfordshire, in the form of a traditional English windmill 975ft in "height" complete with sails, spire and millstones. It was made by selectively uprooting plants in a field of heavy duty forage maize marked out in a grid, using for reference the maze design on squared paper. Weeding out by hand one fifth of the plants resulted in 4.47 miles of pathways covering nine acres. Unlike mazes in other media, maize mazes are seasonal. In late October, the windmill maze will end up as forage.

*The Windmill Maze opens 10am Saturdays and Sundays until mid-October, last entry 4.30pm. Adults £3, children £2 (under 3s free), family ticket £10. Willett's Farm is at Frilford, eight miles south-west of Oxford, signed from the A43 at the Abingdon South exit and on the A338, the Oxford to Wantage Road. (Tel: 01865-391266 for details.)*

## Games people play

Don Black finds poetry and elegance in the green baize of the snooker table

Don Black, 58, lyricist and songwriter

Snooker is often maligned by people who tend to think of it in terms of a misspent youth, but I've always found a kind of poetry and elegance about the game. There's something very peaceful about green baize, through which you enter a wonderful universe of cushions and clicks of halts; skill and treachery.

It's the only game that makes me forget about everything else for a couple of hours. All I care about is getting the white ball black. I play with friends at the RAC and we're very childish about it. Even serious players take on another persona and use the phrases that come up in television commentaries: such as "Oh, he's still got a hit of work to do" or "He may not win a lot of trophies but he's the most exciting player". We copy all of these, and if anyone gets a break of 10 or 11, we ask if they mind taking a urine test, as drugs must be involved. Completely idiotic. I think it takes the

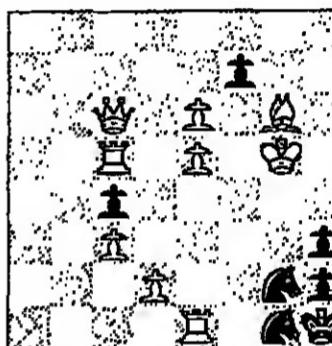
Mozart was an avid billiards player, so was Ira Gershwin. In fact I've been reading a book by the man who wrote *The Bridges of Madison County* and he's written a whole chapter on the poetry of snooker.

There's a kind of elevated, almost meditative thing about it. To win a game is victory; it's elation and you can't put a price on it. To give you some idea, a man called Donald Alcorn won the competition a couple of years ago. He's 76, and winning was the equivalent of a knighthood.

Sometimes I look at my watch and I can't believe I've been playing for two hours. A game of snooker and a sandwich. That's not much for a man to ask, is it?

'The Bridges of Madison County' by Robert James Walker is available from Mandarin Books in paperback for \$4.99. A full wedding service with champagne and flowers may be booked at Roseman Bridge, Madison, for around £250.

## Chess William Hartston



White to play and mate in five. This problem by A. Popandopulo won first prize in a Soviet chess magazine problem composing tournament in 1940.

White's problem here is how to dig the black king out of its bunker. With both black knights pinned, there is clearly a danger of stalemate, so White must find something to do before moves of the black f-pawn run out. The proto-solution must therefore begin something like this: White plays a move; Black plays f6 or f5g6; White unpins one of the black knights; White plays another move; the knight hops right back where it came from ... and then what?

Somewhere along the line, White must get rid of one of those knights without delivering stalemate. Of course, if he could capture the knight with check, it might even be mate, and that's the clue to the answer.

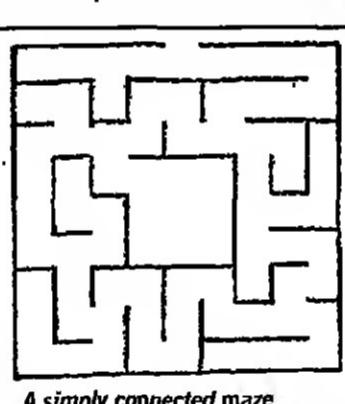
The knight on g1 can only move to e2 or f3, both of which could be controlled by a bishop on the d1-h5 diagonal; the knight on g2 can only move to e1, e3, f4 and h4, all of which can be covered by a rook on c4. Now all we have to do is put all the pieces together. The basic line works like this: 1.Ra1fxe2 Bb1! Nc2.Bc2+ Ng1.4.Bd1 Nc2( or Ng3) 5.Bxc2(Bxh3) mate; or 1...fxg6 2.Rd2! Nf4 (or anywhere else) 3.Rd4+ Ng2 4.Re4! any 5.Rxb7 mate. Just two more lines tidy up loose ends: 1...f6+ 2.Kf5 fxe5 3.Rxg4 4.Rxe3 and 5.RxN mate; and 1...f5 2.Bh5 f4 3.Bd1 g3 4.Qxg3! Nxf3 5.Bxg3 mate.

The games page is edited by William Hartston

ILLUSTRATION: KYLE SMILEY

mazes to shed light on the process of learning. They have even shown that rats are as good as humans at maze-solving, which makes this type of problem a "species non-differentiating intelligence test". Even for non-carbon-based species, one might add, for students of artificial intelligence set logically programmed robotic mice to run mazes to test how well they find their way about and interpret their environment.

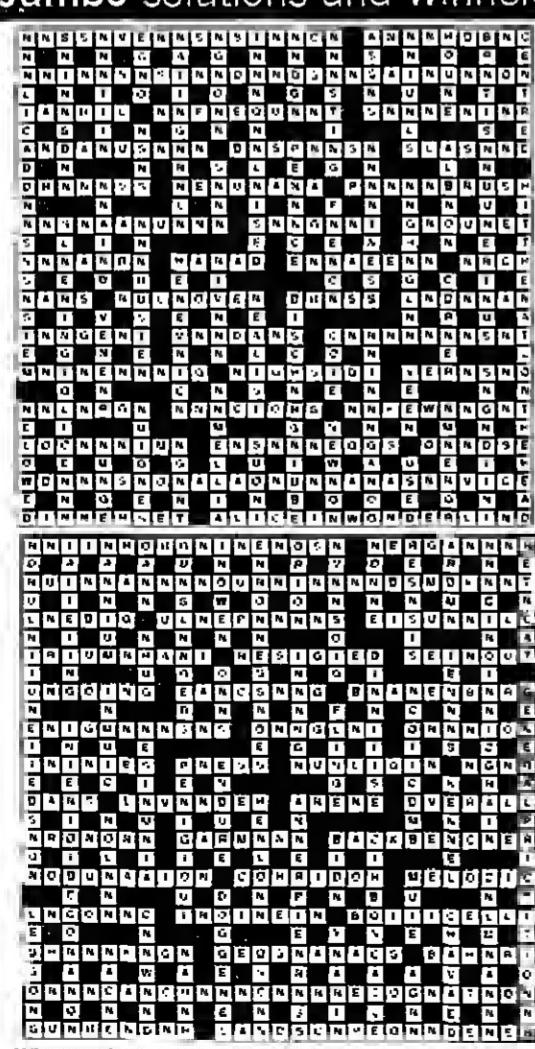
Mathematically speaking,



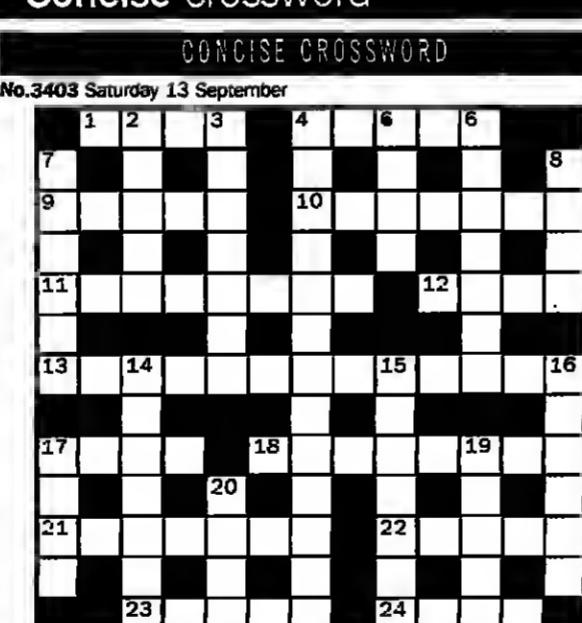
Trémaux's method for traversing multiply connected mazes: consistently mark one side of the route (whichever side you choose stick to it throughout) with chalk, for example.

- At a new junction choose any path you like
- When by a new path you reach an old junction or a dead end turn round and return the way you came.
- When by an old path you come to an old junction, take a new path if there is one; if not, take an old path.
- Never go along any path more than twice.

## Jumbo solutions and winners



## Concise crossword



## Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer South			
North			
♦A 5			
♦8 7 6			
♦A 7 5 4 2			
♦K 7 6			
West	East		
♦J 9 6 3	♦I 0 8 4		
♦4 3	♦K Q J 10 9		
♦10 9 8 6 3	♦K J		
♦J 3	♦5 4 2		
South			
♦K Q 7 3			
♦A 5 2			
♦Q			
♦A O 10 9 8			

There was no chance to establish the diamond suit and South decided that he needed two ruffs in dummy to come in his twelve tricks.

Without touching trumps, declarer started with the three top spades, throwing a heart from the table. Then he gave up

a heart to East, who continued the suit for dummy in ruff. South came to hand with ♦A and a diamond ruff, then led his last spade. When West followed suit, however, declarer had a problem. Should he play East? West for the missing ♦J? He had a fair count of the distribution by now and judged that East had three clubs and West only two. So he ruffed the fourth spade with ♦K and finessed ♦A. West won and ended by taking a wrong guess.

South opened 1♦, North responded 1♦, East bid 1♦, and South rebid 1♦. A peaceful start, but now North went to 3♦ and South jumped to Six. West led ♦4 against the slam and as there was the danger of a second round ruff declarer won immediately.

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# Conductor of hope and glory



John Walsh  
meets...

## Andrew Davis

**T**he taxi driver who took me from Lewes Station to Andrew Davis's house was impressed, but cool about it. "The bloke who does the Proms thing, right? Yeah, *Rule Britannia*, all that. Mind you, we have quite a few famous people living round here. See that house?" He squared his shoulders with local pride. "Richard Stilgoe used to live there."

My, my, the hierarchy of fame! If Andrew Davis's name isn't better known to the nation at large, as the most versatile and most English of British conductors, it isn't for any lack of application on his part. Not only has he been Chief Conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra since 1989, and Music Director of Glyndebourne for a year longer, this head-spinningly busy man has been living in a recent maelstrom of recording dates, concert tours, foreign trips, millennium discussions, rehearsals... and, in the middle of it all, he's been finding himself a new job abroad.

But he's a modest figure in a world where conductors are turning more and more into *monstrosi*, and is still best known for presiding over the rumpus room of elephantine patriotic fun that is the Last Night of the Proms at London's Albert Hall. Not only has Davis hosted more Last Nights than anyone since the glory days of Sir Malcolm Sargent, he's thrown himself with more evident relish than anyone else into the role of benevolent musical uncle - Davis conducting Henry Woods' *Fantasia on British Sea Shanties* through a jungle of orchestrated parps and duck calls and random honks from the motor-horn madcap in the arena; Davis whirling round to face the audience, his fringe of hair sweeping wetly aside like a Timotei commercial, to lead the audience in the chorus of *Rule Britannia*; Davis's Bersteinian thrash-baton climaxes to the works of Mahler; Davis brushing away the tendrils of party-popper streamers that eventually fringe his face like pastel dreadlocks, in order to make a speech that tactfully appeals to the assembled anoraks' musical knowledge, as well as their, you know, incurrigible zaniness...

"The Last Night of the Proms is something I enjoy enormously, though I look forward to it with a mixture of eager anticipation and dread," he told me. "You might think nothing can go wrong, but it certainly can. The emotional temperature varies considerably year by year. I think it was 1994 when things got really out of hand. Someone tipped about 200 balloons onto the audience, and they were bursting - not because people were pricking them, I think, but because of the heat. But everyone was wound up, possibly because we'd finished the first half of the concert with perhaps the fastest *Balkhazar's Feast* ever played, and it was so exciting, they were virtually hysterical by the time the second half began." He giggled delightedly. "That was the year Sir John Drummond (the former controller of Radio 3 and farscible Proms commissioner) decided to rap the children over the knuckles. But it had an effect. Next year they were much better behaved."

I thought of the night when, well beyond the call of duty, Davis sang to the audience his self-composed variant of Gilbert and Sullivan's famous *Pirates of Penzance* song, "A Modern Major General". The first two lines ran: "This is the very model of a modern music festival / With entertainment sonic, promenadeable and aestival" - Davis had even found a rhyme for "festival" with a semi-obsolete word meaning "summery". His performance betrayed an indulgence with the promenaders, of a kind unknown to Sir John...

Did he ever meet the hard-core Protheriders, the ones who chant in unison at the conductor, the musicians and the audience in the gallery?

"Occasionally I get little notes from them saying,



Andrew Davis (below) will tonight conduct the Last Night of the Proms: he can handle party streamers, he balks at balloons during cello solos

Montage (above) entitled 'Malcolm Sargent Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Bland', inspired by the King's Singers singing the Beatles earlier in the proms, by Sophie Dixon

could you say Happy Birthday to my Auntie Vi? and so on. Sometimes it's more, er, viable things..." Did he ever lose patience with them? "Yes, once when a balloon burst in the middle of a wonderful cello solo in the *Sea Songs*, it made me furious. I'd been working hard that summer, and I had a rather short fuse." Did he yell at them? "Oh no - I just gritted my teeth..."

Sitting on the sofa of his immaculately tidy sitting-room, with its great picture window that looks out over the rolling sweep of the South Downs,

both Sir Georg Solti (who was to have conducted last night's Verdi Requiem) and some would say, the emotional heart of England.

"We'd been on holiday in Italy for a fortnight, and Diana's funeral was on the day we returned. We watched the first repeat. I thought the music for the service was beautifully done, extremely well chosen - the Purcell, the traditional hymns. The Abbey choir were fabulous. And I thought Elton John was great, though I just don't know how he managed to do it. One knows how it is when someone you're close to..." His voice dies away. Davis's own mother died last year. Was it true he and Elton John were related? "Well... his... it's... No, I mean there's a distant part of my family that are Dwyers from vaguely the same part of the world." You mean Pinner? "Ah no, Buckinghamshire."

We leave this highly contentious topic, never to return. Did he anticipate a mood of grief at the Albert Hall? "I think it'll be lively. We are slowly moving away from..." (Silence fell again). "But I think this is an illness that's going to keep the country in its grip for a while yet. I'm going to make some reference to the Princess in the speech. It's something I've been thinking about at length. It's been two weeks since she died, and perhaps one should get on with life, but it's had such a profound effect on everybody, something needs to be... But I'm not going to suggest that we sing 'Land of Hope and Glory' in her memory."

Ah yes, that song that became such a cliché, Elgar himself got sick of hearing it. In a concert recorded towards the end of his life, the great composer can be heard wistfully instructing the orchestra, "Play it as if you never heard it before." It's become, thanks to the Proms and Davis, a solid export success. "It fascinates me that the Proms have become so popular overseas. You'd think nobody but the British could be remotely interested but in Germany, Holland, Sweden, people are always talking to me about it. Even Japan. I was there earlier this year with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. We arrived for rehearsal, and the organiser came up and said, 'You will play *Pomp and Circumstance*, won't you?' I said, 'Sorry, no, we haven't brought the music.' They were horrified. It's in the programme,' they said. 'If we

get the music, will you play it?' and I said, 'Sure.' That was at 3.30pm, and with typical Japanese efficiency they had the music by 7.30pm. The concert went ahead, we played the last piece and I announced that, for an encore, we were going to play *Pomp and Circumstance*. A great cheer went up. I turned round and started conducting - and there was this odd expression on the orchestra's face. So I turned round, and everyone in the audience had pulled out a Union Jack and was waving it, grinning ecstatically."

The Proms maestro will preside over these pleasant excursions for only three more years - his last Last Night will be in September 2000, after which he leaves these shores with his American wife, Gianna Rolandi, and their eight-year-old son Edward (of whom there's a charming photograph, on the table beneath a spectacular Tiffany lamp, seen playing the piano in an Athens concert hall, clad in a stylish Hussar dressing-gown) for Chicago, there to direct the Chicago Lyric Opera. It's the culmination of a life spent guest-starring in several dozen orchestras world-wide.

Davis's *curriculum vitae* is an unbroken trajectory of music-making in every corner of the globe. He was born in a Nissen hut, a wartime hospital in the grounds of Ashridge House, Hertfordshire, but grew up in Chesham, Bucks, before the family moved to Watford. His father was a printer's compositor, who sang in the church choir; his mother was an on-off parlour pianist. "I started playing the piano when I was five or six, with the music teacher up the street and just figured out that I liked it. I wasn't a great prodigy. At 10 or 11, I played for the Hertfordshire county music adviser, who recommended me for a junior exhibitionship at the Royal Academy, where I used to go on Saturdays and then all through my teens." What kind of teenager was he, this chap whose first or second record purchase was the Berg violin concerto? Davis leapt to his feet. "You really want to know what I was like? Look." He crossed the room and returned with a monochrome holotype snap: two beaming parents, looking old before their time in that weary post-war way, one pretty, pubescent sister, two small brothers astride

Muffin the Mule - and, standing serenely aloof from the family, one 15-ish Andrew with tiny ice-cream cone and posing cockatoo. His long gawky face and disastrous NHS specs, his fifth-form clothes and air of spotty embarrassment are hard to connect with the cool and beaming sensualist beside me. "It's the worst photograph ever taken of me," he confesses. "My mother died but my father's alive at 83, and doesn't look that much different now." But Andrew... "Yes, I know. I was a typical school swot, an eccentric musician." This was the late Fifties, I said. Was he aware of coffee bars, Elvis Presley, rock 'n' roll? "Oh, I noticed them, but only with disapproval. I was a horrid little prig, basically. Then I started to play the organ when I was 15, and my voice broke and the assistant organiser at the local church left at the same time, and I stepped in." Another professional break came at the Watford's celebrated Palace Theatre, where "an Italian trio used to play during the interval. The pianist was off for six weeks with jaundice, and they asked me to stand in. We played everything. Lots of Rogers and Hammerstein selections. One week there was a Blackpool farce and we played 'O I Do Like to Be Beside the Seaside'; the next week it was *Henry F.* It was great, I fell in love with the theatre." He thinks back and a sweet teen-dream smile crosses his face. "I fell in love with the leading lady too, a complete schoolboy crush." You can almost imagine the moment that the crowd-pleasing showman emerged from the geeky young academic. He went on to be organ scholar at King's College, Cambridge, but decided to switch to conducting, made his debut with a student orchestra playing Haydn divertimenti, and won a grant that took him to the Accademia di St Cecilia in Rome. His big break came in 1970 when he stepped in at short notice (stepping-in is a leitmotif of his early career) at the Festival Hall to conduct the BBC Symphony Orchestra in Janáček's impossibly difficult *Glagolitic Mass*. He was made. By 30, he had conducted every major orchestra in America, toured the Far East and Israel. Four years later, he'd made it as far as China, conducting that rusty Peking Central Philharmonic in Beethoven's *Eroica Symphony*. "It was the only one that hadn't been disbanded in the Cultural Revolution," he recalls. "I met the conductor of the Shanghai Philharmonic, who'd spent the eight years of the Revolution working as the bicycle parking attendant outside the building where he used to conduct..."

David spent 13 years with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, playing to ever-increasing audiences and indulging his fondness for his favourites - Elgar, Mendelssohn, Stravinsky, Mahler, Rossini.

This eclectic stew of compositional flavours is typical of a man who loves using an orchestra to bring out the essence of contrasting idioms, who thought nothing of putting, say, Stravinsky and Richard Strauss on the same bill at the Festival Hall.

"There's been a lot of complaining that orchestras all sound the same these days," he said, "but of course, they don't. The Philadelphia for instance, in the years when Stokowski and Eugene Ormandy were running it was distinguished by its voluptuous string sound - which was great, but you wouldn't want to hear them doing, say, Mozart. Now they're much more flexible, and people say they've lost their distinctive sound. It's a balance..." But you don't want an orchestra that homogenises the extremes of the repertoire? "No, indeed, it's something I've fought against all my professional life. What I've always tried to do with the orchestras I've worked with, is find that versatility and flexibility for things that are important."

"Flexibility" is one of Davis's words. It's something the BBC SO has needed, in order to accompany him through his long-standing obsession with 20th-century English composers - Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Michael Tippett - and his fearless engagement with the home avant-garde, including Judith Weir whose work is featured in the Proms tonight. But spend an hour in the company of this charmingly explosive man - four parts hyper-precise academic, six parts adrenalin-fuelled populariser - and you feel that, had you a micron of musical talent and a French horn, you'd follow him anywhere. Before he legs it to the Windy City ("It's bloody cold there, I know, but I survived Toronto for 13 years and Chicago is such an exciting place to be"), we should celebrate his remarkable talent with something more than duck-noises, motor-horns and plastic parrots. Go for it, Promenaders.

*The first part of Last Night of the Proms is broadcast 7.30pm tonight on BBC2; the second part will be broadcast from 9pm on BBC1. There is a simultaneous broadcast on Radio 3*

## All sensation and little explanation

**T**he members of the Royal Academy who protested this week at the inclusion of Marcus Harvey's painting of Myra Hindley in next week's "Sensation" exhibition are implicitly taken to task for their philistinism in an art journal produced before the Academicians entered the row. The journal's editorial, thinking the only protests would come from the press, condemns the "extreme emotional response" of the protesters who "bitterly resent the idea that art can tackle important issues". The journal is the *Royal Academy Magazine*, published before it realised that some of the RA's own leading lights were about to become "extremely emotional".

But this rather embarrassing irony for the Royal Academy was matched by an even better irony when art critics and others gathered to debate the Hindley paint-

ing on ITV on Thursday night. One of the "Sensation" artists described his painting "White on White", an all-white canvas. The programme's chairman, Andrew Neil, roared with laughter asking if it was a snowstorm. An all-white canvas is in fact the star of the satirical play *Art* currently in the West End. The denouement finds one of the characters coming to terms with the picture by thinking of it as a snowstorm.

What was depressing about this debate involving critics, artists and members of the public was the sneering and refusal to explain on both sides. Surely by now the champions of conceptual art should be able to articulate their passion, rather

than merely condemning as old-fashioned and philistine anyone who disagrees with them. The visual arts seems to be seething with cultural snobs, and light on cultural communicators. A mission to explain is needed. And the troubled and vacillating Royal Academy could begin the mission next week by explaining the artistic worth of the Myra Hindley painting, rather than simply accusing their detractors of "prejudice" as they did this week.

The literary world seems suffused with

irony. Take the fall-out over the Edinburgh Book Festival. Publishers are complaining about alleged poor organisation. For example, Ian Banks was billed as talking about the intricacies of adapting his book *The Crow Road* for TV, though he had nothing to do with the adaptation. But surely this was a way of challenging a top author's imaginative powers. My favourite comment though is about the event at the Book Festival which looked at easing disorders. The sponsor was a delicatessen,

and the talk was followed by a food-tasting session. Incompetent organisation? Not at all. Martin Amis would kill for such a deliciously grotesque plot.

The BBC Symphony Chorus performs in The Last Night of the Proms tonight. The singers, whose day jobs include vicars, policemen and accountants, recently returned from a triumphant debut at the Salzburg Festival. One assumes their time between concerts there was spent practising for the mother of all music festivals. One would only be half-right. The vicars, policemen and accountants were spied re-creating favourite scenes from the film *The Sound of Music* in situ. Find-

ing that they were performing in the actual avenue where the Von Trapp family gave their last performance before fleeing, members of the BBC Symphony Chorus climbed up the arches, yelled "They're gone, they're gone" at the top of their voices and broke into a roasting chorus of "Edelweiss".

A touching tale from the French piano-playing Labèque sisters, Marielle and Katia. They tell today's issue of *Classic FM Magazine* how they lived for seven years in a London flat above the actor Dirk Bogarde. Fans of his, the two sisters were thrilled when he sent them a letter. "I was very happy," says Katia, "I thought he wanted to meet us." In fact, he was writing to complain about the noise, and continued to complain on a regular basis until they moved out.



David Lister

# arts & books

## And the dude played on

Ralph McTell's street cred may have taken a knock back in 1974, but he can still sing you a song that'll make you change your mind: By Colin Harper

**T**onight in Huntingdon, Ralph McTell begins a 46-date tour that marks, refreshingly without a single item of anniversary merchandise or even a passing mention in the promotional advertising, his first 30 years in showbiz. It is with an irony as subtle as the singer-songwriter's own work - dealing as it so often has, in its own quiet way, with everything from old age to homelessness, autism, addiction, injustice, and racism - that such radical harstrumming, however sheepish the clothing, should be kicking off it's the very heartland of Conservative values.

It comes as no surprise to find that the image of

myself - because the world knows it, it gets played in schools, people learn to play guitar to it, and maybe some of them get a perspective about alienation and loneliness through it. I can't knock it."

Which doesn't stop other people. But what other people? Not that long ago French and Saunders memorably rounded up a squad of rock's guitar heroes for a TV sketch revolving around the premise that McTell, arraigned in the dock before a judicially attired Dawn French, had conned a generation with a play-in-a-day guitar book that didn't work. John Williams turned the gig down, but McTell was duped into being there and couldn't wriggle out of it. The result? A nation of twenty- and thirtysomethings marvelled sympathetically at the man's sheer good-blushiness for months thereafter.

"The funniest thing was, straight after we'd done the thing in one take, and I was trying to find my manager to break his nose," Lemmy out of Motorhead went up and asked for his money - and it was only a 30 quid appearance fee - and they said, "Well, er, it's the BBC." Lemmy, you'll get the money in due

course." "I won't now," he said. And they actually had a whip round among the cameras crew to get him his 30 quid! So I was standing there, just staggered by this - it was real rock 'n' roll, and it took the heat out of it. And of course when the show went out, people would point at me in the street and shout "Guilty!" I couldn't believe how well the whole thing went off.

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delicate sentiments doesn't have any. Yet even random listening to his albums reveals a powerful craftsman whose best work transcends its period of creation. A straw poll among friends and colleagues reveals some surprising results too: musicians, from heavy metal guitar players to Irish traditional singers, have absolutely no hesitation in calling him top man; young women, and I have no explanation for this, have simply never heard of him; while media folk tend to chortle and launch into good-natured banter concerning cabaret acts and Radio 2.

But, for some brief period around the 1970 Isle of Wight Festival, Ralph was well on his way to the land of the Nick Drakes and the Tim Buckleys - those doomed adonis types who reside in a posthumous netherworld of boxed sets and glittering retrospectives in *Mojo*. He was, as contemporary reports confirm, the popular sensation of the whole vast, end-of-swing-Sixties event. Surely the biggest audience of his career?

"Yes, apart from Episode 10 of *Alphabet Zoo*, when we hit seven million," he muses, with a deadpanningly profound grimness. "But it's a shame really that I couldn't have gone on seamlessly from the Isle of Wight 'cos it couldn't have got more cred than that, could it? I mean, there I was in front of 250,000 people with an acoustic guitar, two mikes and absolutely no crowd-manipulation powers, just the songs. I was on for 35 minutes, it went down a storm. I got an encore and it was just amazing..." He can remember exactly what he was wearing on the day too.

But no, the great god of rock iconography had other plans for the young man from Croydon - and who is to say they haven't had their own quiet, subtler rewards? Certainly Ralph isn't denying his gratitude for an enviable career that's maintained concert hall audiences over three decades and still encompasses, at his live shows, three generations. Others may have burnt out only to live on in the imaginations of biographers and dream-seekers years hence, but Ralph has just dealt with his muse in a less sensational, but no less passionate, manner.

"I really don't try to offend and shock," he says. "I want people to be stimulated by what they hear from me and maybe discuss it. I'd never say to somebody 'You're talking a load of shit you fascinates bas-

tard' - that's not my way. I take 'em on but I do it in a different way. With Tim Buckley, and some of the others that passed on, I always felt they knew everything too soon and wrote with a certainty that leads to finality. What would they have done at 50? Whereas me, I didn't know. I suggested, I put some things across - very gently, perhaps too gently for some people - but I've been finding out. I'm 52, I'm still not entirely certain and I'm still looking to back up my theories and opinions through the response of others as I share them in songs... I think I've just put that rather well!"

His communicative powers are at their height, he works out every day, his memory is razor sharp, but he knows his time is coming.

"I can't bear it when people talk about legendary players and say, 'Yeah, he was OK, but he was a bit tired.' You shouldn't be tired, you should be on the ball - I hope people never say that about me. But it's getting harder and harder to gain the fitness for these long tours. It's a young man's game."

There may be no box-set, but a biography is imminent and right now autobiography is absorbing all the man's creative energy. He's written only one new song in two years. A worrying trend? "Well, it used to worry me tremendously," he says, "but then the kids aren't breaking down the doors to get the latest Ralph McTell album any more. I also think that I should only write when I'm really moved to. But I started to write a little memoir about growing up in the 1950s and it's still going on! I've written pages and pages and I know it's going to be OK because I go into a kind of daze when I know I'm writing good stuff. I mean, right now I could get up from my word processor, walk out the front door and meet someone I knew when I was seven years old and not be surprised - I'm right there, really there, like a catharsis, and I'm really excited about it. I'm also much more interested in working hard and getting a good show across than when it was easier - when I was current, when the audiences were guaranteed, I carried my nerves and insecurities on stage and it all rushed past. Now I actually go out there and love to work."

Ralph McTell plays Hinchinbrooke Arts Centre, Huntingdon, tonight (tel: 01880 452119)

Jan Marsh on Hogarth's spitting images; John Sutherland on Millennium Anxiety p6; New fiction from Ruth Rendell and Richard Ford p7/8



## When cultures collide

THEATRE With Love from Nicolae Bristol Old Vic

**W**ith *Love from Nicolae* - which brings together an Irish playwright and British and Romanian performers - is a play that attempts to cram an awful lot into a very small space. Scattered in the vertiginous of a family drama, a tale of the prodigal son who left and the bitterness of the good and obedient son who stayed behind, and a history of a woman and her child abandoned by her man, there the stories of life in Ceausescu's Romania, the hope that the 1989 revolution has engendered, and the eternal problems of communication between a single mother and her son.

Maggie, an Irishwoman, takes her son Nicky - a bolshie London teenager trapped in the saltflats of adolescent inarticulacy - to Romania to visit the scenes of his absent father's childhood. In the Black Sea port of Constanza they meet the family of Nicolae, her former lover, and their initial warmth and hospitality opens the door to traumatic truths about the past.

At its finest points, the play explores the contrasts between the two cultures that meet through Nicolae's absence: the Irish, with its fascination for roots and the personal history that made each of us, and the Romanian, blanking the unpleasant past and focusing fixedly on the brighter future that has so recently opened up. Watching a procession of candles, Maggie asks "Are they for the dead, for souls?" "No," replies Mihail, "they are for hope, for a good year to come."

In a story that the writer claims is based on the similarities between the two cultures, it is this total contrast which stands out most strongly. Of course, neither of these attitudes is healthy, and it is the intermingling of the cultures that brings some form of release and acceptance. Maggie, whose life has been totally dominated by one Nicolae, has to come to a country that has finally shaken off the dictatorship of another to learn how to move on.

With a clear visual echo, the set is a Dali nightmare of twisted organic abstracts, which hover over the action like the dried-out corpses of the past haunting the present. Having opened so many rich cultural and philosophical seams, one wonders whether it is necessary to devote a large chunk of the second half to the more conventional subject matter of the single mother's perennial dilemma in prioritising between her new man and her child. Nevertheless, the play holds the attention, and is exciting its unashamed use of some unusual theatrical techniques and a bilingual script which, while creating utter authenticity, never leaves an English audience fidgeting or confused.

*With Love from Nicolae* offers British audiences an opportunity to see some fine acting talent which, until very recently, was locked firmly away from Western eyes. Yet its most remarkable and promising feature lies in its collaborative nature, the linking of hands from the Irish Sea to the Black Sea. One can only hope that it is the first of many works that trample down the rusting remains of the Iron Curtain.

To 20 Sept. Booking: 0117-987 7877

Toby O'Connor Morse



Ralph McTell at the Isle of Wight Festival, 1970 (top) and today (above): 'You shouldn't be tired, you should be on the ball'

Photos: Redferns

Ralph McTell as curdugan heir to the tottering throne of Val Doonican in the family entertainment stakes is one that's become increasingly irksome to the man himself ever since "Streets of London" was a world-wide smash in 1974. "It's a shame when a good song becomes a cliché and people are embarrassed by it," he sighs, and obviously not for the first time. "But, by any criteria, I have to say that it is a good song - even if I didn't particularly like it at one time

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Veni, vidi, vici?  
Ann Murray (right)  
renders unto Caesar  
what is Handel's  
Photo: Nicola Kurtz

To hear Ann Murray tell it, she owes it all to everyone else. To hear her sing, is to know she's telling nothing but the truth. Hail the Royal Opera's far from imperious Caesar.  
By Edward Seckerson



## With a little help from my friends

iven half the chance, Ann Murray would erase herself from the interview altogether. Pretend it wasn't happening, pretend she wasn't there. If you let her, she'll answer most of your questions with a note of confidence in one or more of her colleagues; share the limelight, even when there's no one else to share it with. An interview with Ann Murray is like an Oscar acceptance speech. The Dublin-born singer credits everyone but everyone - from the nun who educated her to her agent - for her success. Everyone, that is, except herself. Whoever it was who said that the Irish were born saying sorry was definitely thinking of Ann Murray. Ask her about her latest recording - a collection of Bizet songs - and the impish face contours: "Oh, God, they're dreadful! Someone should donate them to the insomnia society." Ask her what she doesn't like about her voice, and the response is swift: "From about bottom G to top C sharp. I think the softer I sing the 'prettier' it is... If you can't hear me at all, it's wonderful!"

Take no notice. Ann Murray was taught never to boast (official concert policy). So it's high time someone boasted on her behalf. In an age when so many voices still come "gift wrapped", who sound is still valued over content, when record company executives still speak in terms of the "good recording voice", Murray is here to remind us that great singing, great music, is not about sound, but made with sound. It's about gesture, expression, drama. It's about living, breathing, feeling what the words and

music tell us. When last I heard her, she was Donna Elvira in a concert performance (and recording) of *Don Giovanni* conducted by the late Sir Georg Solti. And with a single aria - "Mi tradi" - she walked off with the evening. It wasn't "beautiful" - the voice isn't - but it was intense, it was meaningful, in the best sense. The palpitating vocal line actually connected with the words, the anger of betrayal was tempered with the pity of compassion in such a way as to convince the audience that this was the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. And it was, of course, now. That is great singing.

"I try to be honest," says Murray with characteristic honesty, "to express how I would feel in any given situation, or how I would feel for someone else in that situation. How the audience would feel. And once you've made that connection, things begin to happen. I suppose I've been lucky in that I've never really had a problem singing. I was well trained, I had teachers who laid the foundations of a technique that would not get in the way. I always thought that my speaking voice, in the sense that the words just happen to be sung rather than spoken. So when you're angry, when you're upset, you don't speak in carefully modulated tones. There's an edge, a hardness creeps into the voice. And if it's ugly, it's ugly."

Just so. Whoa! Handel's Julius Caesar (Giulio Cesare) strides once more into the public arena tonight, in the guise of a manly Ann Murray, singing - beautiful or otherwise - will be the last thing on her mind. But rather the stuff of high drama, high

emotion: the conquering coloratura of "Presto omnia", Caesar's entrance aria, the revulsion and disgust of "Empio, diro, tu sei", his contemptuous message to Ptolemy on receiving the head of the defeated Pompey. As Murray is all too aware, Caesar is full-on from the start. No "Ombra mai fu", Handel's so-called "Largo from Xerxes", to break her or us in gently.

We are seated in her dressing-room at the Barbican, 10 days "on the wrong side" (her words) of opening night. It is the company's first day on stage at the Royal Opera's temporary home (well, one of them). Murray is uneasy. The show is at that nervy, critical stage, the point at which everyone - not least Murray - is painfully aware of just how much "fleshing out" is still to be done. "The temptation," she says, "is to over-compensate, to try too hard to fill in the cracks." Her only practical point of reference for the role has been Richard Jones's "wacky but terribly clever" staging in Munich. She adored that experience but is quick to recognise that one's first encounter with a piece generally takes on a special significance. Lindsay Posner's new production will be just fine, she says, lightening the moment with a sneak preview of her costume: Roman tunic ("Riverdance, don't you think?"), calfskin coat ("The Virginian?"), and the obligatory laurel wreath ("God help me, I'm going to look like a *corps de ballet* cast-off"). You've got to laugh: Singing is such a serious business.

Singing Handel certainly is. And few do it better than Murray. She thanks her agent, Robert Ratray (often and profusely), and

Peter Jonas (late of English National Opera, now *intendant* to Munich) for showing her the way to *Xerxes* (the triumphant Nicholas Hytner/Charles Mackerras ENO staging). Prior to that, there had been *Judas Maccabaeus* and a Bradamante in *Alcina* that, and I quote, "sounded like water going down a sink - and about as clean" (it was, she says, way too low for her), but nothing to suggest that Handel might prove such a good fit for her voice and temperament. She thrives on the *da capo* convention, seizing the opportunity to intensify, to build on the message of each aria in the repeats. She thrills to the risks associated with the vocal pyrotechnics ("it's called *fear*, you know"). She may not say as much (well, she does) if you sniff out the subtext, but she loves to live dangerously.

It's been at least a minute since she thanked anybody, so now it's the turn of her teacher, Frederick Cox, who made a point of providing motivation for even the most technical of exercises. That stood Murray in good stead for working with directors like Nicholas Hytner or David Alden, with whom she collaborated on the stunning *Ariodante*. She sums up that experience simply, as "wonderful work". And to those tired old reactionaries who still insist that the Aldens of this world ruthlessly impose their will over reluctant singers, Murray cites Ariodante's Act 2 aria "Scherza infida", where the physical business of sliding off a roof whilst simultaneously negotiating Handel's athletic coloratura was entirely of her own making. "Directors like David [Alden] liberate your imagination,

they encourage you to express the emotions physically as well as vocally. At the beginning of my career, rehearsals were always a problem for me. Performing was fine - I was someone else. But rehearsals... I felt so inadequate, so inhibited. It was Jean Pierre Ponnelle who first opened something up in me. He didn't care where I'd come from, what my background was; he was the first one to make me feel free to express what the words and music meant to me."

Murray is unique among singers in my experience in that she always - *always* - relates the musical experience to the dramatic context. Opera only exists for her as a theatrical entity, and in that regard she's open to just about anything. The show is the thing. Which in turn has enormous bearing on her recital work. We can trace that back to the debut of an ardent young *lieder* enthusiast who invited Murray to become a founder member of a new venture devoted to regenerating interest in the genre. Graham Johnson was his name and "The Songmakers' Almanac" his cause. "If only Graham had left me at home, I'd have been all right!" she jests, launching into an impersonation of Johnson so painfully accurate (a whole gallery of her colleagues are thus captured) as to have you wondering if she chose the right branch of showbusiness after all. "No, seriously, Songmakers taught me so much about finesse that I did. Each song was a miniature opera, and in creating a concentrated acting performance for each, I was developing something that I could then take to opera without having to fling myself around vocally."

Not that she ever has. On the whole, it's been a healthy, judicious career ("I really don't know what I'd do without Robert, my agent"); lots of Mozart and Rossini and Octavian, of course - one of her key calling-cards and, incredibly, a role she very nearly didn't go through with (suffice it to say, the booted foot of Robert, the agent, was right behind her on that one). Right now, it looks like her operatic life is coming full-circle. Apart from the exciting prospect of Donizetti's *Mary Stuart* in a new production for ENO ("Usurper! Janet Baker fans will cry), her future engagements will "take her back" to when she first arrived on the mainland, as green as an Irish mascot. In Amsterdam, she'll be revisiting Gluck's *Alceste*, the first role she sang after leaving the Opera Centre, and in Munich she's been invited, and feels "honoured", to re-create the roles of Ariodante, Cesare and Xerxes (and re-create them she will - Murray is not one to pack the interpretation with the passport) in a projected Handel Festival. You get the feeling she'll leave it at that.

Her motto has always been to "keep running". She longs for the day (mm too soon, I hope) when she'll no longer have to "keep running" - away from her home, her husband (the tenor Philip Langridge) and her son (Jonathan). Meanwhile, on stage, it's a question of having to, a physical necessity: "I can't hear just standing there. Keep running, and they can't work out how big or old you are!"

*"Giulio Cesare" opens 6.30pm tonight, Barbican Theatre, Silk St, London EC2 (booking: 0171-304 4000), then in rep to 1 Oct*

## Can't help acting on impulse

THEATRE Henry V RSC, Stratford-upon-Avon

To stage *Henry V* in a war memorial surround and to bring on a doomily-fit brigade of modern soldiers as a cautionary counterpoint to the Chorus's rousing introductory speech is par for the course these days. We're used to productions that strive in atom for the play's now embarrassing patriotic fervour by heightening its equally vivid depiction of the horrors and the cost of war.

Ron Daniels' new RSC account of the play could not be accused of even the slightest delay in this department. After that initial march-in, Michael Sheen's Henry and his men are seen back at court watching film footage of the corpse-littered trenches of the Great War, of soldiers going over the top to be massacred. The King's silhouette falls on the screen, the ghastly images tattoo his face.

It's an odd time, you might have thought, for Henry to be subjecting himself to this painful spectacle of senseless carnage, given that he's also looking to the Church to provide him with a motive, however convolutedly conscience-salving, for an imperialistic invasion of France. But that's how the production insists on viewing the king - as a man forced by his position to veer between wild emotional extremes.

Sheen's physical presence as an actor is potently contradictory: at once very virile and curiously elfin. Here, in a production that asks him to lurch from ugly, psyched-up ecstasies of beside-belligerence, to sobbing sensitivity and staring-eyed self-doubt, he really gets the chance to show his qualities in intriguing consort.

The performance is taken at too high a pitch. Confronting the friend who had plotted to assassinate him, the Henry reacts with an embarrassing neurotic intensity, first putting a pistol in the man's hand and daring him to shoot, then snatching it back and holding it to the ex-friend's temples in a frenzied, near-murderous scuffle. He seems such a creature of impulse at moments like this that you forget that Henry is also the wily political operator whose exposure of this friend and the other traitors is a piece of coolly-studied stage management. Indeed, there are times when you feel that, if he goes on at this rate, he'll have to woo Katherine in the final scene from inside a strait-jacket.

Daniels' production equips Henry with a tearful, conscience-stricken colleague in the shape of the young Earl of Warwick. This expanded figure is so appalled by the King's speech threatening the besieged town of Harfleur with hair-raising horrors - a speech made all the more unpleasant here by the squealed sound of the loudspeakers through which it is relayed - that he tries to snatch the mike from the crazed monarch's hand.

The war in which Warwick is, it seems, only belatedly reconciled, is a rum business in this staging. The French are at something of a disadvantage, having not caught up, by some margin, with the modern techniques of destruction espoused by the English. They totter medievally - not to say suicidally - around on high, two-legged silver horses that look more like the weirdo freaks of some post-Vivienne Westwood designer than animals.



Polished performance: Michael Sheen as Geralin Lewis  
you'd take anywhere near a battlefield. Whatever point Daniels thinks he is making here is vitiated by the seriously ludicrous spectacle it affords.

There are one or two compensations, such as Alan David's splendid Fluellen. But, for the most part, the uneasiness generated has less to do with the play than with the production that spells out the contradictions too crassly to be moving. A formidable actor like Sheen deserves a more coherent showcase. To 27 Sept (01789 295623), then touring nationally. Paul Taylor

## Stand by your mania

POP Lambchop 12 Bar Club, London

A man sat, alone with his guitar, on a stage barely big enough to swing a supermodel. Well, not quite alone. In the enforced absence of the other nine or 10 members of his Nashville-based chamber ensemble, Lambchop mainstay Kurt Wagner did the next best thing, and brought their contributions along with him on cassette tape. This worked surprisingly well, and not just as a conceptual riposte to the phoney intimacy of electronic bands playing gigs down ISDN lines.

For all his misgivings about playing on his own ("It's like a dad going on holiday without the wife and kids," he observed poignantly) Wagner's solo appearance achieved an arresting and at times - as in the extraordinary synthesis of taped and live sound on "Gettysburg Address" quite magical union of hi-fi and lo-fi. His precise, soulful guitar playing and unpredictable but intense vocal phrasing were set off to a tee

In a nutshell

NEW MUSIC Barber, Fitkin, Adams / BBC NOW  
Vale of Glamorgan Festival at Cardiff Coal Exchange

the rhythms and textures of both contemporary dance music and Balinese Gamelan, the pieces has the rare virtues of being short in duration, continuously witty and intensely joyful. Though it's relatively simple, the orchestra dispatched it with due decorum, and the moiré effect of the tonal colours continued to shimmer in the mind's eye long after its conclusion.

Nothing, however, could have prepared you for the world premiere of Graham Fitkin's Clarinet Concerto, *Agnostic* - a Festival commission - which followed. Though Fitkin has been producing really interesting and engaging work for some time now - usually hard, flinty pieces with

uncompromising titles such as *Tough*, *Gruff* and *Blunt* - this was by any standards, a quantum leap forward. Opening with a long, Mahler-like breath of strings, the soloist David Campbell - who played superbly - was forced through a deeply moving progression of increasingly querulous and turned-in-on-themselves harmonic loops, while the strings set a sinister background of brutally stark Psycho-like stabs.

The resolution was almost achingly Romantic, British pastoral updated to an edgy, utterly contemporary, urban landscape. Though in say so sounds suspiciously like overkill, this may turn out to be one of the most important pieces of the age, and it demands to be heard again soon.

The Violin Concerto by John Adams, which comprised the second half, has become, since its composition in 1993, a kind of symbolic token of the mainstream acceptance of American minimalism - or at least of Adams - by orchestras world-wide, and it was performed with great elan by the star soloist, Kurt Nirkkanen. This, however, is perhaps a minimalism that has conceded much of its aesthetic *rêve* to the Romantic demands of the modern orchestra, with the virtuosity of the soloist occurring at the expense of the ensemble. Nirkkanen - who, the programme notes informed us, is a keen tennis enthusiast - even interpolated a few Jimmy Connors-like grunts into his dizzyingly effective performance. He was good, too, but Fitkin's Concerto remained the prize of the evening.

Phil Johnson

## Jan Marsh meets the evergreen satirist with a soft heart but savage art

# A brush with kidding Billy

Hogarth by Jenny Uglow, Faber, £25

**O**ne night in 1732, as a youngish married man, William Hogarth set off with four friends on an impromptu jaunt, proposed in the tavern and then executed forthwith. Amid non-stop drinking from the Thames to the Medway, they flung dung at each other in mock fights, lost an overcoat (but held onto their wigs) and were nearly marooned on a mudbank. In the churchyard at Hoo, Hogarth dropped his breeches and perched on a grave rail, "having a motion"; whereupon one of his companions swished his bum with a bunch of nettles, obliging him to finish the business with his back against the church door.

Such irreverence, to both the deceased and the Church, was woven into Hogarth's art as well as his life. It is a clue as to why, despite his aspirations to honour in history painting, he remained always a satirist of genius, a scatological comedian seldom invited into the solemn purloins of High Art.

Today, 300 years after his birth, into the world of the Protestant succession, exploding consumerism and Augustan wit, sequences like *The Rake's Progress*, *Marriage à-la-Mode* and *The Election* fall on view in a tercentenary exhibition at the British Museum opening on 25 September, together with works by William Frith and David Hockney are integral parts of our visual heritage. Despite the loss of context, their crowded, vigorous and inventive mockery is endlessly available for re-use, like a sort of Spitting Image pickled in aspic.

One can easily transport Hogarth out of time, imagining the asperity he would direct at current follies and evils: the celebrity waddlings, the greedy speculators, the savage tabloids, the miscarriages of Justice, the self-important scribblers. And his grim vision of Gin Lane is, *par passu*, that of apocalyptic essays on death and desolation from the "menace of drugs" in the present day.

Jenny Uglow makes use of all the scholarship that now attends Hogarth studies, and has resolutely kept her subject within his historical place and time. She resists notions of universality, offering more of a synthesis of latest knowledge than a personal view. Occasionally, indeed, her Hogarth is almost lost in his world, like a short (he was under five feet tall) unfashionable figure in a busy street.

The narrative of Uglow's previous biography was propelled by the breathless speed of Elizabeth Gaskell's own letters but – while his paintings and prints are full of movement and noise – so few of Hogarth's words survive that we strain to hear his voice.

When we do, the sound is as vivid as the pictures. For instance, he writes about the rendering of haroque angels as swarms of babies' heads with duck wings under their chins, "supposed always to be flying about, and singing psalms, or perching on the clouds", and yet so agreeable that their absurdity is forgiven: "St Paul's is full of them."

Or the cant of the art dealer, who talks up a dismal Old Master-piece and then, "Spitting on an obscure Place and rubbing it with a dirty Handkerchief, takes a Skip to the other end of the room, and screams out in Raptures – 'There's an amazing Touch! A man shoud have this picture a twelvemonth in his Collection, before he can discover half its beauties!'"

Hogarth was a Londoner, born hard by Barts Hospital and Smithfield. He was



The virtue of good ale: health and happiness in Beer Street, opposed to Gin Lane's misery in the famous 1751 engravings

apprenticed to engraving and set up shops in Leicester Fields, as it then was. This central area between the City and the Court, was that of the newspapers, print shops, theatres, studios, coffee houses and taverns where all men who lived by their talents in the arts and media met.

He had a chip on his shoulder, because his Cumbrian-born father – a struggling schoolmaster with a vast, unpublisable dictionary – was for some time imprisoned for debt. This surely fuelled Hogarth's stubborn independence and insistence that his deserts were

greater than his rewards, as well as his refusal to play the polite ape, which could have brought preferment. His friendships were those of honest fellowship. In portraiture, he could never flatter for frankness was his best tribute.

Culturally, in his lifetime, satire will give place to refinements of sentiment, which he seems not to have felt. Yet the most remarkable testimony to affection is glimpsed in a brief note to his wife of 20 years, which begins "My dear Jenny, I write to you now, not because I think you may expect it only, but

because I find a pleasure in it, which is more than I can say of writing to anybody else." If the postman brought news of her return it would be better than the music of a kettle-drum, but she was not to hasten home.

To both Jane and her Billy, the lack of children must have been a deep, if silent grief, poignantly refracted in Hogarth's energetic, extended support for Thomas Coram's Foundling Hospital, where a sequence of orphans were renamed William and Jane Hogarth. As well as a savage brush and burin, their benefactor had a sympathetic heart.

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## Voyage from Dome's day to doomsday

John Sutherland enjoys his flight in a revamped Time Machine

A Scientific Romance by Ronald Wright, Anchor, £9.99

**S**et in late December 1999, this is the first of what will be a numerous and remunerative genre: millennial novels. The nervous-Nineties invariably induce in the Western world an apocalyptic hysteria, better expressed by literature than public festivals. *A Scientific Romance* is among other things, an end-of-the-world fiction, replete with allusions to the Book of Revelation. Above all, as the Wellian title indicates, this is a homage to the father of 20th-century science fiction (or "speculative fiction"), as some have preferred to gloss SF).

Wright's scientific romance (H G Wells's preferred term) pays homage to *The Time Machine*. By a nice coincidence, Time is to be the great theme of the Millennial Dome Experience (if they get it up in time). This novel provides an uncomfortable overture for that jubilation, as did Wells's picture of racial degeneration and the final heat-death of the solar system.

Literary historians will have happy hours exploring this book's intertextual tissue. This is a novel about novels. It is not, of course, the first of its kind, although it may be the cleverest. In 1976 Christopher Priest produced *The Space Machine: a scientific romance*, a fiasco also based on *The Time Machine* and dedicated to Wells.

In its often baffling cleverness, Wright's novel recalls Brian Aldiss's homage to the mother of SF, *Frankenstein Unbound*. But *A Scientific Romance* is more ambitious in weaving together a whole library of works: not just Wells's fable, but Richard Jefferies' lesser known vision of a future drowned England, *After London*, Mary Shelley's *The Last Man*, William Morris's *New from Nowhere* and M P Shiel's surreal visions of planetary catastrophe. And few cognoscenti will read it without being reminded of J G Ballard's beautiful and prescient vision of global warming, *The Drowned World*.

Beneath its mantle of literary sophistication, Wright provides a gripping story – almost as gripping as Wells's original. It takes the form of a "message in a bottle": a found manuscript. The narrator, David Lambert, is an industrial archaeologist, curator of the Museum of Motion in a converted St Pancras Station.

Professionally successful, Lambert has a disastrous personal life. He has betrayed his best friend, "Bird" Parker. Bosom friends at

Cambridge, David seduced Bird's bird, the Egyptologist Anita, while on a dig in the East. Bird flunked out of Cambridge and is now a down-and-out. Meanwhile, Anita has died of a wasting illness – CJD, as it turns out. More ominously, it seems that David himself (along with the whole British population) may also be infected. He suffers strange interludes of paralysis and hallucination.

Amid this crisis, David is put in possession of a mysterious letter from none other than H G Wells. It emerges that the novelist and his lover, Tania (an anagram of "Anita") actually did create a time machine in the late 1890s. She took off and is due to return a century later, on 31 December 1999, the eve of the millennium.

The machine duly makes its appearance, but without Tania. Lambert takes possession of the vessel and launches himself into AD 2500. He discovers a future England searching under the man-made and man-destroying greenhouse effect – a desert with roses of tropical jungle. Humankind (with sheep and cows) has been almost entirely eliminated.

The bulk of the narrative is a laptop-computer journal of Lambert's odyssey from Canary Wharf (half-submerged by the swollen oceans), through a wasteland England to Scotland. Here he falls into the hands of a tribe of genetically-mutated Scots – Celtic barbarians hybridised with hottentots to supply a survival breed of brutality and leathery pigment (this is not a novel which will help the devolution cause). It is Easter and the Macbeths, as they call themselves, have their own anniversary celebration in mind for their fair-skinned captive. Ominously, Lambert is 33 years old.

*A Scientific Romance* keeps the reader hooked with the traditional elements of suspense and surprise. An accomplished performance, it is Wright's first novel. He has, however, written well-received travel books and the novel is embellished with Donatien Rousseau-like descriptions of a globally warmed England, habitat of crocodiles, piranha and tigers. A friendly puma, called Graham, stinks and litters in St Paul's.

It's the hardest of tricks for a novelist to sustain, but throughout there is a pervasive hint of Ambrose Bierce's story "An Episode at Owl Creek". Could this all be the fevered product of a microbe-infected brain, the result of an unlucky hamburger in the poisoned 1980s?

## God, Mammon and the guardian angels

Jack O'Sullivan trails a business guru back to his Irish vicarage roots

The Hungry Spirit: beyond capitalism – a quest for purpose in the modern world by Charles Handy, Hutchinson, £14.99

**A**t the beginning of his new book, the hugely successful business guru Charles Handy describes how he rejected his father's values. The son of an unambitious Church of Ireland clergyman who had little interest in money, Handy resolved at 18 "never to be poor, never to go to church again, and never to be content with where I stood in life". He duly went off to make a fortune as an oil executive, economist and writer.

Yet *The Hungry Spirit* shows how much Handy has changed, revealing him as the Prodigal Son. He has, it seems, come full circle, preaching of a kinder capitalism, of more fundamental human needs than making money. It is a softening that attracts a considerable following among those grown tired of harsh laissez-faire economics.

Not that Handy has refound God or taken to the hair shirt. At 65, he still keeps Christianity at arm's length and revels in Mammon's material pleasures – the oft-mentioned homes in London, Norfolk and Tuscany. Nevertheless, the homespun philosophy here is unmistakably, though probably unconsciously, an updated version of that learned at his father's knee – a Protestantism shorn of God.

Handy's father would have devoted his life to the individual's relationship with an external deity. The son is committed to less remote dialogue with the deity (the Nineties, the inner self, the human spirit). And while Handy senior probably rallied against the presumptions interventions of Rome's priests between man and maker, Junior, eradic Protestant that he is, joys in the tailing away of the authorities that have stood between the individual and self-realisation – big government, the corporation, established religion.

We are, he declares, forced to be free. "More than ever before, we are on our own, left to forge our own destinies." For Handy, this is a source of excitement, rather than fear, for the man who coined the phrase "portfolio working" has found his métier as sage. The message is that success and happiness lie in both companies and individuals being true to

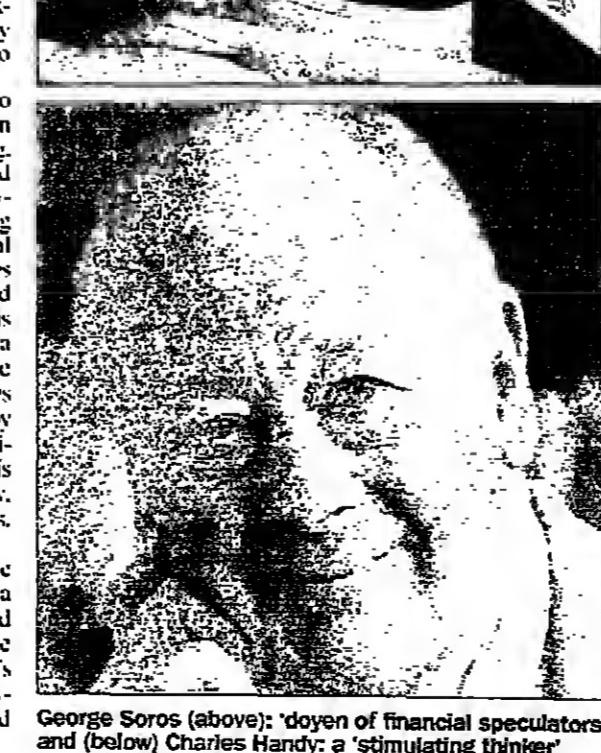
themselves, identifying what they are about before they decide what they have to do.

In big corporations, Handy divides a hungry spirit to achieve elevated goals beyond mere profit. In pursuing these goals he sees their opportunity to gain long-term success, immortality indeed, beyond the survival of current employees, customers and shareholders. He describes a futuristic "Citizen Company", acting as responsible member of society and granting trusted employees privileges similar to citizenship.

For ordinary people, he frames the notion of "Proper Selfishness": a responsible individualism, attempting a marriage of capitalism with his childhood morality of self-denial. The echoes of his upbringing in Ireland in the Forties come through his idea that the basics in life should be subsidised, so we can each focus on higher goals than mere money-making. The concept sounds remarkably like the clerical stupid that his unworldly father once lived on – and that Junior so despised.

Handy is always a stimulating thinker who offers a warm sense of hope for the future in a world where change can seem threatening. He has the persuasiveness of the preacher and the literariness of the anecdotal Irish storyteller. Additionally, the knowledge of a long career in business, combined with the moral authority that commerce enjoys today, gives greater strength to much of what might sound like wishful thinking from, say, a religious leader. But Handy has his flaws. He is not a rigorous philosopher; for example, his distaste for determinism in favour of freewill ignores rather than tackles the doubts raised by thinkers such as David Hume. And autobiography never lies far below the surface of his grand ideas, giving a passion to their advocacy, but a weakness to his broader prescriptions. We can't all be Charles Handy.

Reading *The Hungry Spirit* will, however, be an uplifting experience for anyone seeking a philosophy in a world short of well-expressed humanist creeds. Handy has performed the brave and imaginative task of weaving his life's experience into the best he thinks worth saving from the past. His father would be proud of him.



George Soros (above): 'doyen of financial speculators' and (below) Charles Handy: a 'stimulating thinker'

The global market may wreck local cultures but, says Diane Coyle, it can also boost democracy

One World, Ready or Not: the manic logic of global capitalism by William Greider, Allen Lane, £25

**C**ommunism is dead but Marx was right. Capitalism is about to enter its final and fatal crisis. There will be misery and unemployment in the West, while the East will find its traditional culture torn to shreds by the financial vultures.

So says William Greider, the latest recruit to the school of prophets of economic doom. His book slots into the new genre of "endism", predicting, with a nicely judged degree of reluctance, that unfettered finance capitalism will destroy all it touches. "Our wondrous machine, with all its great power and creativity, appears to be running out of control toward some sort of abyss," he writes.

Greider, the national editor of *Rolling Stone* magazine, is in good company. Malaysia's prime minister, Mahathir Muhamad, this month threatened to throw currency traders behind bars, saying that speculators were trying to sabotage his Asian Tiger economy. In fact, they ought to be shot, the intemperate Mahathir said. He blamed George Soros, dozen of financial speculators, for the region's currency and stockmarket crisis.

Ironically, earlier this year Soros himself expressed some concern about the flaws in late 20th-century capitalism. In its triumph, it had left behind the poor, the ill-educated, workers made redundant from industries that transplanted to countries like Malaysia. A backlash would become inevitable without a kinder capitalism, he warned.

Greider likewise sees Malaysia as a beneficiary of the global jobs auction. Visiting an American-owned silicon chip plant, he quotes one of the managers saying: "We had to change the culture." He adds: "The government would like to maintain Islamic principles and protect people from western values, but whether the government likes it or not, the people are becoming westernised."

This chunky tome, badly in need of editing, is pitched somewhere between Marx's *Das Kapital* and the *Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. In so far as there is any analysis, it amounts to a garbled theory of excess investment and underconsumption. Greider predicts a collapse in the rate of profit and a catastrophic financial crisis when companies realise that nobody can buy the products they are over-supplying.

But the tone is pure Huck Finn, with our wide-eyed correspondent reporting from the economic hotspots. Take his visit to Rob Johnson, a New York financier working for Soros who happens to have just bought \$4 billion of bonds, or financial IOUs, issued by European governments. "What a day!" he says to Greider, who reports: "None of this made much sense to me until Johnson explained the play." You'll be pleased to hear that he gets to grips with it eventually.

He goes on to explain the Soros phenomenon and the "fundamental insight" of the speculators: that "national governments expected to guarantee stability were trapped between two worlds – their obligations to domestic economies and the new force of the global market".

This is as good an explanation as any of a currency crisis, but it misses the point. The financial markets are the guardian angels of global capitalism, but they spring into vigilante action only where there is something to be vigilant about. Most often, this is either a government issuing IOUs it is unlikely to be able to repay easily, or a nation sucking in far more imports than it can pay for with export earnings. The markets force unsustainable situations to a messy conclusion.

Is this a profoundly undemocratic evil? I think it is exactly the reverse, especially in the case of countries whose politicians have more of an eye on their own than the national fortunes. This is not to say there is nothing to worry about in the way the global economy now operates. But it is a worry about politics rather than economics. It is shared by Benjamin Barber in his polemic *Jihad vs McWorld*, and, in a far more intelligent way, by Anthony Giddens in *Beyond Left and Right*.

The trouble is that while fundamentalism is anti-democratic, capitalist democracy has become anti-political. It presents all issues as technical problems, matters of good or bad administration. As Greider puts it, the trouble with those optimists about globalisation is that their optimism "abolishes history, mainly by separating the epic economic changes from their political consequences". When I read this sentence, I found something to agree with. The other 500-plus pages pile up more travel notes and more rhetoric. Sadly, it is all whipped cream and no pudding. Look elsewhere for plums of analysis.

*Women with Men* by Richard Ford, Harvill, £14.99

**T**hese quiet stories of bewilderment between the sexes are marked by a peculiarly contemporary loneliness. The men are querulous, mind-blind and childish; the women preserve their inner world as best they can. Austin, the narrator of the first story, is introduced with great precision. From the first moment we catch him smiling at the edge of a publishing party in Paris we know his exact notch on the corporation ladder, the length of his marriage, his unease in the French language, and his habit of picking up presentable young women on jaunts abroad. He has a certain pathos, as if such womanising is little more than pursuit of a self of his own life has never supplied.

The woman he sets his sights on in Paris is Josephine. She is in the throes of divorce, living alone with her son, and

# Americans embarrassed

Elaine Feinstein takes delivery of a melancholy message from the US male

her appeal lies in her sadness. On Austin's last night in Paris, she drives him back to his hotel, and they sit for some time in the car. She lets Austin hold her and kiss her, as if it does not matter much one way or the other, and he is too disconcerted to push their intimacy further.

As far as Austin is concerned, his long marriage has been a happy one, though regrettably no longer satisfying all his needs. Back in America, he discovers his wife sees their relationship rather differently. In the expensive restaurant to which he has taken her as a placatory

gesture, she astonishes him by announcing she has decided to leave. Austin enjoys a momentary sense of relief that her gesture has turned him from villain into victim, but is nonplussed by her evident dislike.

What more natural than to take a plane for Paris? Yet Austin has been more disturbed by his wife's summary description of him than he realised. It takes him some days to contact Josephine, and murmur his belief that there is something between them. When he does, he meets only irritation. "What?" she asks. And that short ques-

tion is the nub of the story, not the ensuing melodrama of Austin losing her little son Leo in a Paris park.

The second story has an American rural landscape. A marriage has broken up. A boy is to be taken off to his mother by his feisty aunt Doris, who had once been a rival for his father's love.

For a time, it looks as if the story will centre on the boy's sexual initiation by his aunt. Instead, it turns on Doris's encounter with Barney, an Indian she meets in a bar. When police arrive looking for Barney, Doris unexpectedly directs them to the lavatory where he is

hiding, and there Barney is gannet down.

Doris's motives are never clarified. It may be an act of vengeance, since she was once married to and abandoned by an Indian, or it may be, as she explains to the boy, because she insulted that Barney has murdered his wife. In either case, it is an unpredictable, almost whimsical betrayal.

In the third story, we are back in Europe, this time with Matthews, an undistinguished teacher of African-American literature, whose first novel is about to be translated into French.

Matthews is accompanied by blonde, buxom Helen, whom he has taken up with in the aftermath of a collapsed marriage. When Matthews' publisher explains his inability to keep their appointment, he and Helen determine to enjoy their visit to Paris as the most unsophisticated of tourists.

Helen turns out to have her own agenda, however, and Matthews begins to feel at the periphery of his own trip. Helen is looking for something, we gradually realise, because she knows she is dying of cancer, and is too honest to accept Matthews' mumbled words of love. Their hotel is placed at the edge of a famous cemetery.

If there is any spiritual solace at the edge of mortality, these stories show none of it between men and women. Richard Ford is arguably the finest American novelist of his generation, and these stories have all his usual chill veracity; but his is a bleak vision.

## Dashed dreams

Maya Jaggi on a tragedy of slavery

*Brothers and Keepers* by John Edgar Wideman, Picador, £5.99  
*The Cattle Killing* by John Edgar Wideman, Picador, £16.99

In 1976, John Edgar Wideman's brother was convicted of murder after a botched hold-up and sentenced to life imprisonment. *Brothers and Keepers*, published in 1984 in the US and only now in Britain, is his moving attempt to "salve something from the grief and waste". Though it traces his younger brother Robby's downfall, the book is the story of two African-American lives. Robby's fugitive status arrests the author's own flight. As he notes when handed in for aiding and abetting: "No matter that I wrote books and taught creative writing at the university. I was black. Robby was my brother. Those undesirable facts would always incriminate me."

This painful mix of memory, imagination, feeling and fact draws on Robby's misings in jail and flashbacks to the brothers' growing up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - the setting for much of Wideman's fiction. Yet this is more than a guided tour of the ghetto by one who straddles the tracks. Open-ended but with a honed anger, it ranks as one of the sharpest, most disquieting treatments on the state of America.

Wideman's novel *The Cattle Killing* is a similarly questing exploration of the hideous condition across continents and generations. As a plague in 18th-century Philadelphia becomes the pretext to ostracise its black citizens, an itinerant preacher rebels against a Church that confines his brethren to back pews. Seg-

regation and lynchings presage a later era, as do echoes of Martin Luther King's elusive dream.

The young preacher relays "orphan tales" from his life to a sick woman he hopes to cure. His haunting story of Kathryn, a black maid who disappears into a lake clutching the golden-haired corpse of a baby, loops into that of a blind white woman running a Negro orphanage with her husband, a philanthropist by day and rapist by night.

Another tale of the middle-aged Liam, a slave "gifted" to the painter George Stubbs. Liam fled with a white maid to the "freedom" of the New World, where the illicit couple must pose as a widow and "her husband's trusted servant".

The linchpin is a tale of Xhosas tricked by false prophecy into killing their cattle, ushering in the settlers' reign. "The Africans are destroying themselves, doing to themselves what British guns and savagery could not accomplish." A frame story, where an author returns to his hometown ghetto, makes explicit the parallel with the hip-hop generation gunning one another down.

Though its abrupt shifts between different voices can be confusing, the novel's form allows echoes between fragmented lives. Its characters battle to keep from losing their faith, while stories are told with an urgent mission to heal and redeem. The author-persona wants "every word ... to be a warning, to be saturated with the image of a devastated landscape". In prose both poised and starkly beautiful, this novel by one of America's most audacious writers hits its mark.



Travels with my art: views of Santa Monica Beach, California (above), and the station at Metz, France (left), by Paul Hogarth. The globe-trotting watercolour specialist celebrates his 80th birthday this autumn. His memoirs in pictures and words, 'Drawing on Life', are published by David & Charles (£30), while the Royal Academy's exhibition 'Paul Hogarth at 80' runs from 24 September to 31 October

## Autumn on a home front

Patrick Gale enjoys a saga of myths and mellow fruitiness

*Echoes of War* by William Rivière, Sceptre, £16.99

**T**he end of the last century was marked by literary decadence and anti-respectable satire. As the fires burn to our sides, novelists seem drawn in a very different direction – to that most bourgeois of forms, the family saga. Among gay writers, the impulse behind this is the threat of the AIDS epidemic to erase memories along with lives, and a desire to delineate common ground with ancestors. Sagas emerging in the mainstream, however, hark back to the first half of the century and its two world wars. Perhaps the imminence of full European union is feeding this odd nostalgia, or the lack of a common enemy, or simply a climate of moral relativity.

At first glance, William Rivière's addition to the heap contains all the salient ingredients of the uniforms-and-heartache genre. There are two Norfolk manor houses, a Tuscan villa and the glamour of interwar Rangoon.

As well as the honourable, war-torn clan at the story's heart, there is a strangely beautiful wayward heroine, a smattering of attractive but morally flawed gentry, oodles of money, doomed love, frocks, family jewels and halls aplenty. Wrapped in a traditional country Christmas and the sensations of a Boxing Day shoot with the same serious precision he has brought to bear on the Mediterranean and Far East, both settings which he incidentally returns to here.

Rivière is startlingly strong on detail. He evokes the Norfolk landscape, the smells and sounds of a traditional country Christmas and the sensations of a Boxing Day shoot with the same serious precision he has brought to bear on the Mediterranean and Far East, both settings which he incidentally returns to here.

The title implies that this is to be a novel about warfare perceived at a distance. In the 1930s, Norfolk was peculiarly remote. Blanche is more taken up with horseflesh and herbaceous borders than with distant politics, just as Charles's primary concern is his painting and the possibility of acquiring a young Italian mistress.

Even once the war gets underway we see it filtered through garbled, late letters, unhelpful telegrams and Home Guard directives. When the survivors return to Norfolk, each has witnessed and suffered atrocities. The rural routines centred around church, architecture and the pleasures of field and table which the older characters have battled to preserve, are offered back to them at the end.

A humble, autumn wedding proves a kind of redeeming cultural ritual. The effect, however corny and Mrs Miniverish, touched even this old cynic.

If the novel loses its way it is when Rivière breaks away from his Norfolk world to give us chunks of history or to show us in close-up atrocities in Burma or Europe which might have proved more shocking delivered indirectly. He also has an unfortunate habit of lessening the impact of narrative developments by hinting at them in advance.

*Echoes of War* is no great addition to the catalogue of war literature – although its evocation of the horrors suffered by European women under the Japanese proves a corrective to the relatively cosy picture painted by *Tenka*. As a record of an intensely English country scene, however, it is sure to win admirers among the urban disaffected or homesick.

## PAPERBACKS



By Christopher Hirst,  
Emma Hagestad  
and Boyd Tonkin

**The Amusements of the People and Other Papers; and Selected Journalism 1850-1870** by Charles Dickens (Dent, £12.99; and Penguin Classics, £9.99) Flawlessly edited, Dent's trawl of journalism from 1831-51 reveals Dickens as a dazzler among hacks. He chews the fat with coppers, blusters the Pre-Raphaelites, choruses at melodramas, taunts writers of begging letters and presumes Rev Audrey by anthropomorphising locos. He tenderly observes the inmates of a workhouse hut but squarely defends the use of the treadmill in prisons. Dickens wouldn't be Dickens without a dollop of sentimentality, but there is also plenty of waspish satire. His effervescent energy fizzes off every page.

Penguin's wonderful 600-page compendium (edited by David Pascoe) chooses highlights from the magazines that the mature Dickens founded and ran, *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. He goes on duty with the 'detective police', sails to Calais on the night mail, joins strikers in Preston, attacks the empty pomp of state funerals and digs deep into every niche of London life, high and low. Superb writing and tremendous value.

**Sap Rising** by A A Gill (Black Swan, £6.99) How do you sell a novel that received notoriously mixed reviews? Simple. You print "Do not buy this book" on the front cover. In fact, it is hard to see what all the fuss was about. Gill's portrait of energetic couplings in Knightsbridge is little different to dozens of other smutty, sniggering yarns published every year, though stylistically he aims higher (Tom Sharpe out of E F Benson) and sexually he goes further (bestiality with an alsatian) than most. Many pages show signs of an overstretched imagination in a work that succeeds neither as comedy nor porn.

**The Prehistory of Sex** by Timothy Taylor (Fourth Estate, £8.99) In this persuasive survey, Taylor imparts an erotic frisson to dry-as-dust archaeology. Noting that "megaliths are undeniably phallic", he insists that humans have always regarded sex as much more than reproduction. Ice Age sculptures from Siberia were possibly bondage pornography. The contraceptive properties of plants (the seed of Queen Anne's lace is a "morning after" remedy) have been known for thousands of years. In Roman brothels, illustrative tokens specified the service required. Their imagery reveals that there's nothing new under the tongue.

**Stiff Lips** by Anne Billson (Pan, £5.99) It has always been Clare's ultimate fantasy to own a flat in Notting Hill in London. So, when best friend Sophie (of the naturally glossy hair and Harvey Nicks charge card) gets there first, it's a little too much to bear. That is, until Miss Perfect starts to complain of unexpected bumps in the night and nocturnal visitations from the long-dead members of a Sixties band. Not as off the wall as it sounds, film critic Billson's sardonic, sexy ghost story explores the nastiness of close friends and the allure of W11 - a location, it seems, people are willing to die for.

**James Stewart** by Roy Pickard (Hale, £9.99) Sadly fortuitous in timing, this portrait is as workmanlike as its subject. Stewart's low-key style suited directors such as no-nonsense Henry Hathaway ("Don't ask questions. It's a load of crap"). Erstwhile lover Gloria de Havilland saw him as "a grown-up Huck Finn". This was as true in life as on the screen. Though a brave wartime pilot, he ended up in Birmingham when driving from London to Norwich. His versatility ensured work in 80 films - but Ford bawled him out during *Liberty Valance* and the legendary *It's a Wonderful Life* bombed on release.

**Eureka Street** by Robert McLiam Wilson (Minerva, £6.99) Rarely has Belfast sounded so appealing: city of bombs and knee-cappings, but also leafy avenues, green hills and whimsical street names. Written with ease and giddy panache, McLiam Wilson's fourth novel describes the coming of age of Chukie Lurgan - fat, Methodist and lucky in love - and Jake Jackson, a Catholic atheist dumped by his English girlfriend, as they get to grips with grown-up sex and less than grown-up politics.

**Mars and Venus on a Date** by John Gray (Vermilion, £7.99) Men are from Mars and women are from Venus and international love guru, John Gray, is from California. But his take on the extra-terrestrial dating game is decidedly down to earth. Martians are advised to dress in uniform ("even when off duty"), compliment women lavishly on their choice of sunglasses, and he seen in the company of gurling babies; while Venusians are advised to hang out by the loo on long haul flights and cruise the aisles for soul mates. Life on the mothership gets complicated.

**Back Door to Byzantium** by Bill and Laurel Cooper (Allard Coles, £12.99) A voyage by barge from Calais through the cockpit of Europe to Turkey should make a great travel book. Unfortunately, this yarn is marred by excessive detail. We're told of every sleeping pill swallowed, every bill paid and every local eat encountered. Bad jokes proliferate: "There was no crock of gold at the end of the Rimbaud". Though a trifle pleased with themselves ("Laurel is very fond of her cats and Bill is very fond of Laurel"), the Coopers are keen observers. Lost somewhere among the twee humour is a perceptive portrait of Mittel-europa.

## AUDIOBOOKS



What exactly are recitative and ralentado? How did the oratorio develop into opera, and chorale become concerto? Huge numbers of us like to hum along with Pavarotti and tap our feet to the "March of the Toreadors", but have a profound inferiority complex about our general knowledge of music. Listening to *The History of Classical Music* (Naxos, Shrs+, £9.99 tape; £14.99 CD) is like witnessing the scattered pieces of a half-familiar jigsaw being fitted into an orderly historical frame extending from Hildegard of Bingen to Benjamin Britten. Robert Powell, one of the very best readers of the spoken word, reads Richard Fawkes' fascinating text with interested intelligence.

The four tapes are punctuated by dozens of examples of the music in question, with informative cover notes for those who want to hear more.

Christina Hardisty



Confronted with the bespectacled gaze of Cardinal Niño de Guevara, the last things his victims could say was 'I didn't expect the Spanish Inquisition'. For Guevara was the Grand Inquisitor himself, and El Greco (c. 1600) doesn't let us forget it. From 'The Papacy', (Weidenfeld, £25), a sumptuously illustrated but rather bitingly collection edited by his eminence Paul Johnson. Three papal picture-books appear this autumn; publishers clearly expected a vacancy would soon arise in Rome. Now, of course, they have other plans

## Earthly powers

**The Conversion of Europe: from paganism to Christianity 371-1386** by Richard Fletcher, HarperCollins, £25

Should you expect a reward for converting to Christianity? The question embarrasses many modern Christians, but the answer from past missionaries and converts is an emphatic yes. However, should the reward be left solely to the next world - harps and thrones, etc? Or should the goods start being delivered in this life?

The Bible's many books offer a variety of options. Scripture written in good times suggests that good times begin the reward: corn and wine and oil increase, and they are a down-payment on being faithful to God. Scripture written in bad times argues that bad times make good Christians: in fact they are a necessary entrance pass. "We are God's heirs and Christ's fellow-heirs, if we share his sufferings now in order to share his splendour hereafter," Paul told Christians in Rome. Unpleasant phenomena like being thrown to lions by Nero were included in the deal.

By contrast, during the 1,000 years covered by Richard Fletcher's masterly book, most of those lining up for baptism expected immediate benefits. The trend started with the Roman Emperor Constantine I, who believed that he won the most important battle of his life by direct decisions of the God of the Christians. He does not seem to have had any further instruction in Christian doctrine. He poured out money and favours on the Church. This was a fateful turning-point in its history.

When Fletcher's story opens, Constantine's successors were turning the alliance between Church and State into permanent establishment. Christianity and the Roman Empire were now inseparable. The Church called itself Catholic, which means worldwide, but its world was that of the Roman state - urban, stately, tidy-minded - founded long before Jesus Christ lived in backwoods rural Palestine.

Christopher Hope has always specialised in exposing the absurdities of political extremism. In earlier books he satirised South Africa's apartheid regime through a mixture of bizarre and chilling images. Now he has turned his attention to its successor. Welcome to the topsy-turvy world of Buckingham, a small town in the veldt, where the district surgeon is being pursued for malpractice by his former gardener, now the town's health inspector, while a hobo who lives in a tree has been promoted to captain of police. Buckingham, or Lutherburg as it was known before democracy, has been through more changes of identity than Michael Jackson. In its current incarnation it acts as a magnet for all those who see "The Change" as an opportunity to take advantage of the much talked-about new spirit of conciliation.

King of the freebooters is Pascal Le Gros, a white attorney wanted for embezzlement who plans to open up a Bushman theme park, and who happens to be sleeping with the town's black deputy mayor, Mimi. The new South Africa has become even more fractured and bigoted than before. Recriminations run riot and some of the novel's most scathing moments derive from the way the two communities, white and black, echo feelings of contempt. The new mayor, an Indian posing as a black, reflects on

**Pie in the sky - or lavish parties now?**  
Diarmaid MacCulloch asks why Europeans chose Christianity

This had a curious effect when the western Latin half of the Roman Empire fell to pieces in the fifth century. The Latin-speaking Church became a curator of Romanitas. That was a paradox, since Jesus had been crucified by a Roman governor, but the alliance stuck. Bishops still dress up on sacred occasions in robes and mitres, a version of late Roman aristocrats' best clothes. Monks who began by opting out of Roman society, as Paul had urged, took to copying classical manuscripts. Without these monks, very little would survive of Greek and Roman literature; it would have crumbled to dust.

By Fletcher's closing date of 1386, Christianity had conquered all Europe. In that year even the highly sophisticated pagans of Lithuania, making the best of a bad job, allied with one Christian power to avoid annihilation by another. Why the success? In the previous 1,000 years, a mirror of the Roman Empire haunted the peoples who had helped to demolish it: Goths, Franks, Saxons. They wanted to be Roman, and the Bishop of Rome was happy to oblige. When he sent a mission to the English in 597, he turned Kent into a little Italy, with churches and cathedrals dedicated in the same way as the leading churches in Rome. An Anglo-Saxon king even went to Italy, thus inventing Chiarissone.

In 800, Christian Europe carried its love affair with dead Rome to the extreme of inventing a new monarch who called himself the Holy Roman Emperor. Like Constantine, many such rulers saw Christianity as a religion which won

battles. They were also prepared to send in the troops to save souls. Not all missionaries were happy about this, but they remembered how Augustine of Hippo had wrestled with the ethics of forcible conversion. He pointed out that Jesus had told a parable in which the host of a wedding party filled the room by getting his servants to force people to come along. "Compel them to come in" became a missionary slogan: "benignant asperity", which means clobbering people with the best of intentions. The Crusaders took this to its logical conclusion by gathering armies to fight (and massacre) non-Christians. It was a long way from turning the other cheek.

So there were carrots and sticks in converting medieval Europe. Few seem to have understood conversion as Billy Graham might today. Most people were ordered to become Christians, usually by their lord or lady. But it was not all mindless coercion. The Church could be sensitive to the pride of the people, and one of Fletcher's major themes is the way it married new to old.

In many places, it allowed people to go on expressing their grief by filling the graves of the dead with prized possessions. Even the great Christian holy man Cuthbert of Lindisfarne was given his grave goods to take with him. The Church encouraged royal families to trace their genealogy further beyond the fierce pagan God Woden, all the way back to Biblical Adam. Bishops outshone non-Christian religious leaders with their splendid heraldry. Wilfrid of York threw a three-day party for high society after dedicating what is now Ripon Cathedral. No doubt the occasion was a satisfying mixture of sold Anglo-Saxon cheer and delicate Roman canapés, if anyone was capable of remembering afterwards.

Fletcher writes deliberately for the non-specialist. He avoids false piety, and effectively conveys the sheer strangeness of the Christian faith in past contexts. Even if God exists, She or He needs constantly to be reinvented, and this is a lively panorama of some of the reinventions fuelling a millennium of Christendom.

Daniel Britten visits a new veldt  
*We, the Moon and Elvis Presley* by Christopher Hope, Macmillan, £15.99

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the uselessness and brutality of the former white rulers: "If they could not shoot it, kick it, fuck it or eat it, they went home and beat someone up." The white churchgoing population has split into two camps over the issue of whether to admit blacks to services. The half that refuses re-names itself the Dutch Reformed Reformed Church.

At times the flippancy of the tone can be excessive, but Hope counter-balances the farce with a tragic account of sinister goings-on under the old regime. Mimi, who spans both stories, was once purchased for six bars of soap, and like most characters dreams of the

## INDEPENDENT CHOICE

Mary Scott on very English whodunits

One of the pleasures of any mystery series is that you know pretty much what you're going to get. In Ruth Rendell's case (*Road Rage*, Hutchinson, £16.99) the expected is Chief Inspector Wexford, who brings to murder in Kingsmarkham all his customary integrity and steady, logical intelligence. But this time there is more at stake than the solution of a crime: Wexford's wife, Dora, has been abducted.

The rage of the title is that of varied protestors who oppose the building of a new Kingsmarkham bypass. They cover the spectrum of activists: Friends of the Earth; the Sussex Wildlife Trust; Swampy-lookalikes; New Age travellers; a pagan who poses for *Today* wearing three rhubarb leaves; and Dora with other respectable citizens who make up the local group Kahal.

But the first crime to claim Wexford's attention is only incidental to their efforts. In the process of the destruction of old badger habitats and the creation of new ones, the badly decomposed body of a girl is discovered. She is soon identified as a missing German hitzbiker and suspicion falls on a seedy minicab driver.

Before the action can move much further, the minicab office is subjected to a seemingly senseless (and violent) attack. People begin to disappear. Wexford suffers an agony of apprehension for his missing wife. She is held along with other apparently unconnected people by Sacred Globe, whose price for the return of the hostages is the abandonment of the bypass. Dora's release is dramatic and her subsequent courage is remarkable as Wexford leads her through everything that happened to her which might constitute a clue to the location of her prison.

In the tradition of the best mysteries, Rendell does not cheat her readers. The cast of characters is finite, the clues are there to be spotted if you are sharp enough. But, whodunit aside, a great deal of pleasure lies in its solid delineation of place and character, and in the serious, highly moral deliberations of its endearing, complex protagonist.

**Booked for Murder** by Val McDermid (The Women's Press, £6.99) is anything but serious. It's the fifth Lindsay Gordon novel, a jolly romp through the world of London publishing. It gets off to a cracking start when a bestselling author is murdered by the somewhat exotic means by which she has chosen to dispatch the victim in her new novel: death by exploding beer bottle. The manuscript has disappeared, so has the computer on which it was written and all the floppy disks. Only the writer's agent, her editor and her ex-girlfriend know the plot of the book. Enter Lindsay Gordon the reluctant sleuth, hired to clear the name of Meredith, the ex-girlfriend. Lindsay is tough, prepared to take chances and, as she uncovers the facts, judiciously apt to put two and two together and make five. She is certain that first the agent, then the editor, is guilty, and she is good as denounces each of them, to her own subsequent embarrassment.

Meanwhile, she is up to a spot of skulduggery on behalf of her friend Helen whose partner has all but squeezed her out of their joint business. The two plot strands merge when Lindsay, after an evening spent backing into the company's computer, is pursued by a hit man intent on silencing her with a baseball bat.

The dénouement - which also involves computers - features a dramatic battle between the villain and Lindsay and her girlfriend. It climaxes with our battered heroines staggering into the street to find armed police surrounding the building. Along the way there are wisecracks galore, and the whole ends on a high note with a jolly good joke: this is terrific fun.

Fun is the last word you'd use to describe John Harvey's Nottingham policeman, Charlie Resnick (*Still Water*, Heinemann, £15.99). A bulky, lugubrious man, he sets about his business of catching criminals with a world-weary air.

A central theme of the novel, and one which links Resnick's own relationship with the circumstances of the murder victim, is the female characters' ambiguous attitude to male violence. That's a bit of an old chestnut, but the plot is intricate and satisfying, with a substantial sideshow in the world of professional art theft.

future while struggling to escape her past. She comes up with an idea to mark the first anniversary of democracy: an Elvis Presley lookalike competition. Presley is the one symbol able to unite this motley collection of characters. The farmers like him as a country boy. The Communists like him because he's working class; the blacks, because he sounds like a white negro.

That the golden age never really existed is no longer of importance. The key point is that the past can be a source of redemption as well as recrimination. In the bloated image of Pascal dressed as Elvis, replete with satin jump-suit and wing collar, and leading the way forward to a new South Africa, Christopher Hope has produced one of his most bizarre images yet.

## Pick of the week

**Booked for Murder** by Val McDermid

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# travel & outdoors

**Oil man Robert P McCulloch paid \$2.5m to move one of the world's most famous landmarks from the Thames to the Arizona desert. Trouble is, Nigel Williamson can now confirm, he got the wrong one.**



A bridge too far: Tower Bridge it ain't, but London Bridge, Lake Havasu City, Arizona, attracts a million visitors a year

PHOTOMONTAGE: JONATHAN ANSTEE; PHOTOGRAPHS: COLORIFIC

## Bridge across the Atlantic

The stars and stripes on London Bridge hang limply in the desert air. Welcome to Lake Havasu City, Arizona, home of the most expensive antique in salesroom history. It is now 30 years since the London authorities concluded that under the weight of 20th-century traffic old London Bridge was not falling down but slowly sinking into the Thames mud and would have to be replaced. Amid great controversy the 10,276 numbered granite blocks originally quarried from Scotland and Dartmoor and which had spanned London's river for 130 years were sold to the Americans, shipped across the Atlantic and reassembled in the desert of Mohave County.

All that was missing was some water to flow under the bridge. But Americans go for simple solutions to these problems. No one found anything strange in removing 3 million cubic yards of desert to create a channel to divert the mighty Colorado River from the course it had followed for tens of thousands of years.

For the bridge, plucked from its comfortable, foggy blankets of London grit and soot, the change could not have been more dramatic. Havasu regularly features on US weather reports as the hottest spot in the union. Last summer the place recorded temperatures in excess of 110F on 100 successive days, the thermometer peaking one

melting July day at 128. Yet London Bridge seems perfectly at ease under the unrelenting sun, and is now second only to the Grand Canyon among Arizona's top tourist attractions.

Through its elegant arches an endless procession of vessels, from the old paddle steamer *Dixie Belle* to high-powered wave riders, head for the expanse of blue water from which the city takes its name.

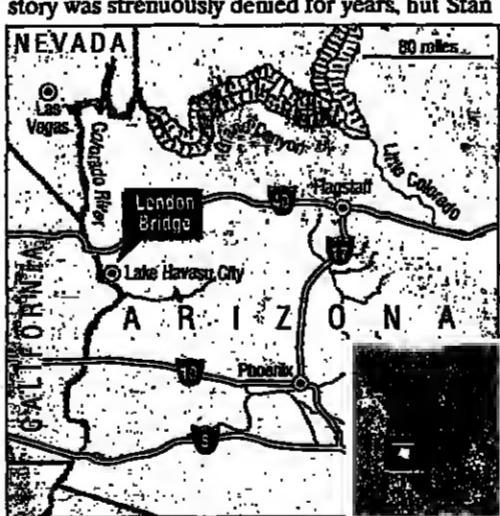
The Havasupians are proud of their bridge and alongside it there is now a thriving "English Village", complete with a traditional pub serving British beer, a London Transport double-decker bus (now an ice cream parlour), a solid Victorian post box and a red Giles Gilbert Scott telephone kiosk.

The pub, the London Bridge Arms, even has its own genuine Londoner popping up the bar most days and telling stories of the Battle of Britain. A former RAF navigator with a bristling moustache and a pukka accent, he is loved by the Americans. This is my father. What he is doing here is a long story but after 14 years he is literally part of the furniture: the staff of the pub have put a brass plate on his favourite chair, bearing the legend "Sir Neville". He hasn't had to buy a beer for himself since he has been here.

Until 1964 Lake Havasu City did not exist. Today it draws a million visitors a year. Their presence is due to Robert P McCulloch, a visionary oil man and developer who had flown over the area as a Second World War pilot and who decided that the

site by the lake was a natural resort location. Together with his architect CV Wood he resolved that what was needed was a centrepiece – something unique to put the new resort on the tourist map and to complement the obvious attractions of the lake.

When McCulloch heard that London Bridge was for sale, \$2.5m for such a large slice of British history seemed like a bargain. Rumour had always held that he believed that he was buying the Gothic castellations of Tower Bridge. The story was strenuously denied for years, but Stan



Usinowicz, managing editor of the local newspaper, told me that shortly before he died Wood had admitted to him off the record that the rumour was true.

Yet if Havasu is proud of its bridge, the town has a love-hate relationship with its lake. On the one hand, the waters are the only thing that make desert living tolerable. On the other, the lake forms the border between Arizona and California, and every self-respecting Arizonan in a cowboy hat has nothing but contempt for the "Californian crazies". Los Angeles is a five-hour drive and every weekend these urban cowboys arrive with their power boats and jet skis, turning the lake into a playground and behaving as local folklore claims only Californians can.

For away from the lake and the tourists, this is a sleepy, small town, Republican middle America – full of the sort of people who think Ollie North was merely doing his patriotic duty. The front page of *The Lake Havasu News-Herald* is devoted to amateur dramatic productions and chilli cook-out contests, although the occasional arrest for drunken rowdiness is always big news – particularly if the culprit comes from California.

Equally unpopular are the "snow birds", the thousands who swell the population between October and March, fleeing the harsh northern states for a winter in the sun. Their crimes include driving at 30mph, stealing favoured spots in the parking lot and grabbing all the best tables at Denny's for Sunday brunch.

In truth Lake Havasu is in the middle of

nowhere, surrounded by hundreds of miles of America's most arid desert. You are advised to carry a gallon of water in the car if you should decide to venture out on a summer's day. Rattlesnakes are a common hazard and coyotes run wild through the washes – the wide, dry riverbeds which carry the surface water down to the lake on the rare but blissful occasions when it does rain. Yet there is no denying that the desert scenery possesses a wild and rugged beauty. Every turn of the road reveals a new vista right out of those John Wayne westerns. Some 50 miles north and a short turn on a winding and rocky section of old Route 66 is Oatman, a real cowboy ghost town and a thriving gold-mining community at the turn of the century.

Today it caters exclusively for tourists, with mock gun fights in the street on a Sunday afternoon – but the donkeys which roam the streets are feral animals, descended from the beasts of the old prospectors, and the tumble-down weatherboarded saloons and corrugated-iron buildings, with names such as "Fast Fannie's", are original. A visit here is a surreal experience – hui if you are ever in the city, do drop in to the London Bridge Arms and buy my dad a beer.

Nigel Williamson paid £347 for a return flight from London to Phoenix on Continental via Houston, and a further £120 for the hop to Havasu on America West. The only airline with direct services to Phoenix is British Airways (0345 222111), but other carriers offer lower fares for connecting services.

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WORLD OFFERS  
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Slovakia offers  
untold treats in  
town and  
mountain, says  
Simon Calder

**T**idy towns hemmed in by wild countryside: Slovakia epitomises the enticement of Eastern Europe, a land preserved in sterile solution for half a century. Yet on a visit to Slovakia, my first encounter with the country was an abject failure.

with the country was an abject failure. June 1988, and the place was merely a four-syllable payoff to Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, a visit to the federation was possible only after spending so much time and energy at the consulate that it amounted to a near-apprenticeship. So instead of exploring Slovakia's neat towns and wild countryside, I elected to travel through on a no-visa-required boat. I enjoyed all of 20 minutes clipping a corner of Slovakia, aboard the Cometa hydrofoil as she whizzed along the Danube from decadent Vienna. The vessel passed, non-stop, through the stern facades of Bratislava, before running through waves of unidentifiable people.

before veering through waves of ungainly suburbia to a Hungary teetering on the brink of capitalism.

C'm to 1997, and Slovakia is seductively easy to reach. OK, so Bratislava airport's only daily connection is with the old enemy, Prague. But the key to Europe's newest capital lies 30 miles west of the Slovakian frontier, at Vienna's airport. Thanks to a fast, frequent bus link, you can reach Bratislava from London or Manchester in less than four hours.

The capital looks dangerously schizoid, a condition created by half a century of communist rule from Prague. Bratislava, a city at the heart of Europe, has precisely the right assemblage of ragged lanes and arrogant avenues, tottering townhouses and enticing churches. Four years of independence has bestowed the place with a comprehensive makeover. The predominant pastel colours look several decades old.

stones brighter, while new cobbles for old

TEL: 0171 293 2222

# A cracker behind concrete

Tarmac give the right feel underfoot.

All of which is marvellous, presuming you have been brought blindfold to the city centre. But the past 50 years have seriously wounded Bratislava. Ghastly apartment buildings scar the suburbs like building blocks scattered by a child in a temper. And the Slovak National Uprising Bridge is unforgiveable. A year's production of concrete seems to have been employed to build a piece of uncivil engineering that resembles the frame for a giant tent. A road has been slung through the middle; not content with disfiguring the Danube, it proceeds to amputate the castle from the Old Town and

Hang on, though: you are here to relax, not to rant about past misdeeds. So slip

Bratislava became capital of Hungary when the Turks took over Budapest in

1536, and for the next three centuries Hungarian monarchs were crowned at the altar of this Gothic masterpiece. St Martin himself is depicted cutting off a corner of his cloak to give to a beggar – a image you might conclude, with worrying parallels to the way the E65 superhighway slices through the city. Time to move on.

Bratislava's main station is one of the great transport nodes of Europe, a place where the destination board gives you a shiver of romance: from here you could board a train to Warsaw, Kiev or Venice. But confine your ambition to within Slovakia's borders, to explore a country with

Like Scotland, Slovakia has a generous helping of rolling lowlands speckled with castles - extravagant structures born of excess wealth and sheer folly. These

height of a range that easily trumps Scotland's Grampians. Yet you can ascend the mountains without any special equipment — indeed, with barely anything except some small change. Hop off the express at Tatranska Štúba, and climb aboard one of the world's most heroic little trains. It hauls itself up an impossible gradient assisted by some extravagant loops. In five miles, suddenly you are deposited

five miles. Suddenly you are deposited at a full-scale ski resort, Štrbske Pleso (vo-els seem to be rationed in Slovak). More bizarre still, a tram is waiting for you.

Silent but for a gentle electrical whirr, the tram slides off for an epic ride along the mountain ridge. Swaying through the clumps of firs, it provides glimpses of broad plains far below. Then you get in

One of the ideas of Eastern Europe that survived the post-war ideological

spring-cleaning was the spa resort. Imposing sanatoria, a cross between a pompous town hall and an almost-de luxe hotel, flank the tramlines. Step inside one and you are dragged back a century (the approximate age of most of the attendants). Queen of the Tatras – that's a title I've just made up, but she deserves it – is the Grand Hotel in Stary Smokovec, where the tram unloads you. Like all the best examples of faded grandeur, this one has three layers of net curtains too many, and three layers of paint too few. Life slows down as soon as you cross the theatrical threshold: ordering a beer in the bar takes an age, during which you can indulge in wonderment at the way the 20th century has swerved past the place.

Another patient tram awaits your descent to something approximating to real life. Plug back into the main line at

Dangerously schizoid: at the heart of Bratislava there are enticing churches and tottering townhouses - but you need to arrive blindfolded in order to avoid the sight of the tower blocks scarring the suburbs

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAMES S...

Poprad, and make for the city which is last stop before Ukraine.

Having spent the last few days revelling in the past, it is a shock to discover Kosice's new attraction: Slovakia's easternmost branch of Tesco. That familiar red and blue logo looks ludicrous in a place where the narrow streets reek of intrigue and tragedy. But turn your back on it: north, a life-size and supremely athletic bronze statue of a marathon runner emphasises a trait left over from state socialism, that Kosice is global HQ for the 26-mile run; or south, towards Hlavne Namestie - "main square". Head back to the station, in anticipation of another grand journey, this time along the southern railways line through plump hills. Someone has perched a preposterous fortress on a street corner, Jakabov Palace, once a presidential residence and now the local headquarters of the British Council. Pop your head round the door, and someone will politely point out the spot in the fine reception room where Vaclav Havel stood in the brief moment between Velvet Revolution and divorce.

**Revolution and divorce.**  
We may possess only a tiny shred of Slovakia, but it's a lovely one.

*There are no direct flights between Britain and Bratislava. Plenty of flights, however, operate to Vienna; from here there is a regular bus service to Bratislava, costing about £7 each way. Flights to Vienna are operated from Heathrow by Austrian Airlines (0171-434 7300); from Heathrow and Gatwick by British Airways (0345 222111), and from Gatwick and Manchester by Lauda Air (0171-630 5924). Simon Calder paid £140 return (including tax) from Gatwick to Vienna on British Airways. Visas are no longer required for British passport holders visiting Slovakia.*

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**Corridors of power:** the Foreign Office opens to the public for the first time this year  
PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID RUSSE

**From the Foreign Office to Finsbury Health Centre,** Hilary Macaskill previews London's Open House weekend

**W**hen 400 buildings open their doors to the public next weekend – free of charge – under the London Open House scheme, among them for the first time will be the Bank of England, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Scottish Office.

The scheme started in 1992 with a handful of buildings that were open to the public for one day, which was increased to two days in 1995. Victoria Thornton, project director and also director of the RIBA Architecture Centre, had seen for herself how successful such projects were abroad and was enthusiastic about making it happen here: "The idea is to increase people's appreciation of architecture, and to make the people working in these extraordinary buildings proud of them, too."

Now more than 20 boroughs are taking part, and the success inspired the Civic Trust to take up the baton and organise Heritage Open Days, taking place outside London this weekend: properties on display range from the Oxford Union and Cheltenham Ladies College to Barclays Group Archives in Manchester.

The building causing most excitement in the year's Open House is the recently restored Foreign Office. The Foreign Office had been intending for some time to admit the public, but the refurbishment was not completed until January this year.

The Fine Rooms, through which the public will be allowed to walk, are stupendous: the Durbar Court, a three-tiered courtyard with Indian overtones and roofed in Victorian



## An open door policy

glass and ironwork; the Grand Staircase with its marble columns and gloriously politically incorrect murals (Britannia Peacemaker, for example); and the Grand Locarno Reception Room, with its high-lit, soaring zodiac-decorated ceiling: "I always think it's like a secular cathedral," says Kate Crow, historian and, appropriately enough, open government officer for the Foreign Office. Incredibly, in 1963, all this was scheduled for demolition.

Meanwhile, behind the famous windowless facade of the Bank of England (the "curtain wall" designed by Sir John Soane) is another extraordinary slice of gracious living. Visitors will be greeted by the gatekeepers in their top hats and pink frock coats and

guided in groups of 25 along the mosaic pavement, past the flower-filled courtyard to the Court Room and Governor's Office. Oil paintings, leather seats, parquet floors and a waiting room which is more like a drawing room give an intriguing insight into the world of high finance.

At the other end of the scale, the 1930s Finsbury Health Centre (designed by Lubetkin) and Rotherhithe Youth Hostel are opening their doors. There's a pumping station in Southwark, a Buddhist temple in Wimbleton and London's third oldest synagogue in the garden of an 18th-century Spitalfields house.

Most visited last year were Somerset House and the former Midland Grand Hotel, which is now St Pancras Chambers. Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the Midland Grand Hotel, with its towering staircase and grand Ladies' Smoking Room, had 8,000 visitors. It has opted out this year, in favour of other openings organised in conjunction with Open House.

Also popular last year were the architects' offices – those of Richard Rogers and Norman Foster attracted up to 2,500 people each. The scheme has generated a great following. "We've had letters from people who have done as many as 13 buildings in a day," Victoria Thornton says.

Christopher Salaman, a City of London guide, devoted a weekend to Open House last year. "There's a great appeal in seeing buildings that are not normally accessible, like the

Old Treasury in Whitehall – wonderful." He also recommends the Economist Building and the former Port of London Authority (now headquarters for Willis Corroon Group).

An innovation this year is aimed at schoolchildren. A Passport to Design can be used by children visiting nine particular buildings, with questions to answer and spaces for drawings. Among other places, the passport will take them to the Foreign Office.

What has Open House got its eye on next? "The Prime Minister's home," says Victoria Thornton. "Why not? They do it in Paris."

*Open House information line 0891 600061; Heritage Open Days (this weekend); telephone 0891 800603.*

## Personally recommended

A chance for readers to choose England's best family holiday

**E**ach year, the English Tourist Board stages the England for Excellence awards, giving recognition to the people who do the most to welcome visitors and present the nation in a good light. Beginning this year, the board has enlisted the help of readers of *The Independent*.

We want you to vote for a new category: the Family Holiday of the Year. The definition is broad. You may choose a resort, or city; a campsite, or hotel; a holiday camp, or activity centre – any location which you feel reflects the best of an English holiday.

Your entry will earn you the chance to bask in your nominee's glory at the England for Excellence awards ceremony in London on 4 November – and to be chosen as the family to visit a new attraction for our regular Outings feature.

The English Tourist Board will bring you to London for the ceremony, while *The Independent* will provide a journalist and photographer to accompany you on your day out.

To enter, just write to The Best Family Holiday Award, PO Box 4AP, London W1A 4AP with the following information:

Your nominated family holiday – and, in 100 words or fewer, your reasons for choosing it. Your name, address, and daytime telephone number.

Here's how your entry could look:



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The closing date is Tuesday,  
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Once all the

entries are in, a shortlist will be chosen. Members of the travel staff at *The Independent*, plus

representatives of the English Tourist Board, will then visit the location and evaluate it in the light of readers' comments.

If yours is chosen as the best nomination for the holiday selected as best in England, you win the prize. And yes, you may enter even if you live in Wales or Scotland, or Ireland.

Usual Newspaper Publishing plc rules apply. The judges' decision is final.

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Inspiration for the Impressionists: the old harbour at Honfleur

PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL SHORT/NPL



Simon Calder

The best thing about the end of the school summer holidays is a reduction in the numbers of disconsolate faces of the people at any of Britain's big airports. Every year the airlines promise to do their best to make it a stress-free summer, yet every year holidaymakers are left stranded. Florida seems to attract more problems than most destinations last summer, thousands got stranded at Gatwick or Orlando while Laker and Airtrours got their acts and planes together; this year, 350 holidaymakers were stranded for a day and a half at

Belfast International. Heathrow Terminal 3 is not a happy airport, either, even though it handles only scheduled flights. "Is it always this chaotic?" I asked the poor chap whose job it was to shepherd travellers through the shambles resulting from the collapse of a tunnel being dug for the express rail link. "It'll be like this at least until December," was the cheery response. But by the time you have battled through the labyrinthine queues, Richard Branson may give you cause to smile: He has named his latest Boeing 747 "Tubular Belle".

This is more than just a poor pun on the name of Mike Oldfield's album – it is recognition by Mr Branson that the success of the simplistic euphonies of *Tubular Bells* created the wealth that led to the creation of Virgin Atlantic Airways.

Mr Branson has since expanded his empire to include a large slice of Britain's rail network. The Manchester-to-London run is one of his acquisitions, but given its punctuality record, the name he has chosen for one of the locomotives is particularly apt. It's called "Mission: Impossible".

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# Let there be light

**Workshop:** spare rampant trees and lift the canopy, Anna Pavord advises a couple arriving in a splendid old home

We have just moved to a house where there is a large number of overgrown shrubs, a mossy mass of lawn to the front, and a multiplicity of hideous holly trees almost everywhere. There is an almost unrecognisable rockery and some impressive feature trees, including a couple of pines and monkey puzzles, but they can't be appreciated because of the encroaching undergrowth. The road is moderately busy and the only benefit of the overgrowth to the boundary wall is the shelter it provides to the noise and visibility of traffic. But the overgrowth is ugly and takes up a lot of space. It restricts the view from the house and makes the garden seem smaller than it is.

**K**eith Purcell and his wife Susan have spent just four months in their house in the West Yorkshire village of Baildon. It is a splendid solid home, built in 1915 for a Bradford wool merchant, Henry Holroyd. The gardener that he laid out round the house, with its screening trees, is now what estate agents tend to call "mature" and the rest of us simply call overgrown.

But that is less of a problem than a patch where there is nothing going on at all. Especially up here on the heights overlooking Bradford, where winter winds must be cutting. But Keith, 44, and Susan, 38, are used to that. They are both Yorkshire born and bred. "Wild horses wouldn't pull me from this place," he says fiercely.

The garden, with its handsome trees, has great potential. It sits roughly in the middle of a corner plot, with roads running along the south and west boundaries. The drive comes in from the west side,

hugging the larch lap fence that divides the Purcells' garden from their neighbour's. The fence replaces an old holly hedge that Mr Purcell had cut down to the ground, but the stumps were resprouting merrily.

It was obvious from Mr Purcell's letter that he did not share my passion for holly, but instead of pouring poison on the stumps (his first instinct) he could perhaps allow some of them to grow up, then keep them trimmed as thin, tall pillars, to make an off-lade down the the left-hand side of the drive. They would only need clipping once a year. The fence behind could be disguised with some vigorous roses, trained out against it on parallel wires. "Rambling Rector" would do the job. Or "Seagull". Or "Felicie Perpetue".

In front of the holly stumps was a low shrub border, with potentilla and too much crocosmia (montbretia). But the border could easily be thinned out with other flowering shrubs to contrast with the potentilla. You wouldn't want anything that grew too big. Brooms (the border faces south) such as *Cytisus scoparius "Zelandica"* would provide cream and lilac flowers in May and June. A daphne would give delicious scent early in the year and by the gate, where there is a little more room, evergreen choisya would make a handsome, welcoming feature, if it could take the winters. I'd be tempted to plant it.

The right-hand side of the drive is bordered by one arm of the intriguing rock feature that then bends round to run all the way along the western edge of the garden. That needed to be cleared gradually of the leafmould and pine needles that had silted it up, obscuring the fine stones.



The L-shape encloses a lawn, mossy and as Mr Purcell had said, not very good. But the soil is acid, and the grass shaded by trees - not propitious for lawns.

But much can be achieved by lifting the canopies of trees and this is perhaps what Mr Purcell should do with the fine pines, and both the monkey puzzles (*Araucaria araucana*). All were disfigured by rings of dead branches. Without those, the trunks would look superb - monkey puzzles have trunks as creased as elephant's legs - and more light would be let through the canopy.

Mr Holroyd, the original owner, had overdozened on various kinds of chamaecyparis, which, unlike holies, are not trees that grow old gracefully. Some, set forward of the boundary screen, needed to go. When they were out of the way, perhaps Mr Purcell would come to love the holies around the south and west boundaries of the garden. They were smothered in berries. They didn't even have prickly leaves. And they were doing a brilliant job in protecting him from wind and the sight and sound of traffic on the roads outside.

If he nibbled away gradually at some of the lower branches of the holies, taking them off close to the trunks of the trees, they would seem less oppressive. And the big old rhododendrons that had once been intended as foreground planting would gain more living space. They were all leggy and in some cases, half dead. But with careful pruning, spread over a couple of years, they could be reinvigorated. The effect of more light and air around them (and a thick mulch) would do wonders. The rhododendrons are evidently old cultivars, perhaps now unobtainable,

Packed with potential: Keith and Susan Purcell have taken on a garden that estate agents might refer to as "mature" but the rest of us would call overgrown  
PHOTOGRAPH: NIGEL HILLIER

and would be worth trying to save. The lawn that now fills the space between the southern boundary and the house was once occupied by what an old neighbour remembers as a "maze". I'd guess it was a formal arrangement of box edge d. beds, typical of the Edwardian period, filled perhaps with roses. Just one remnant of it remains on the lawn, a circle of box hedge with a young, very straggly rose inside. Although it was odd, I'd keep the box circle as a reminder of the garden's past history (but not the shrubs), bringing it down in height and gradually reducing the width of the hedge by clipping round the inside. A rugosa rose such as "Rosenarie de l'Hay" would fill the centre and provide a long succession of scented flowers.

Mr Purcell was keen to do something to brighten up the southern boundary. It does need it. But the lawn was already quite short in proportion to its width, and more shrubs in front of the sheltering boughs may do nothing to improve the proportions. He could compromise by setting three or four big, handsome tubs along in front of the evergreen screen, filling them in spring with great armfuls of tulips and in summer with a tumble of white petunias. The tubs would give the Purcell an opportunity to vary the way the garden looks each year.

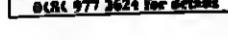
The y have taken on a garden that needs; their kind of energy. It needs the skills of a tree man too, to fell some of the drips and grind out the stumps that present the disfigure the rockery. And when the holies' berries ripen and start glowing among their glossy foliage, Mr Purcell perhaps will feel differently about them. Here's hoping.

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# Leader of the pack

Duff Hart-Davis meets a man who answered the call of the wild

**H**uskies have a limited understanding of human commands. "Jee" (left), "heur" (right), "mush" (get on) and "whu" (stop) are about the limit of their comprehension, and it is almost impossible to train them to do anything but run. Why, then, are they so fascinating?

"The beauty of the animals is that they're not man-made," says Mike Bradbury, who keeps a pack at his home in Herefordshire. "When they run well, it's a dream, because you've moulded something that's pretty wild into working its heart out for you."

A high-class fencing contractor with his own business, and also a forester, Mike is now on the verge of 50, and formidably fit. He and his wife Marion took up huskies eight years ago, and today are at the forefront of dog-racing in this country.

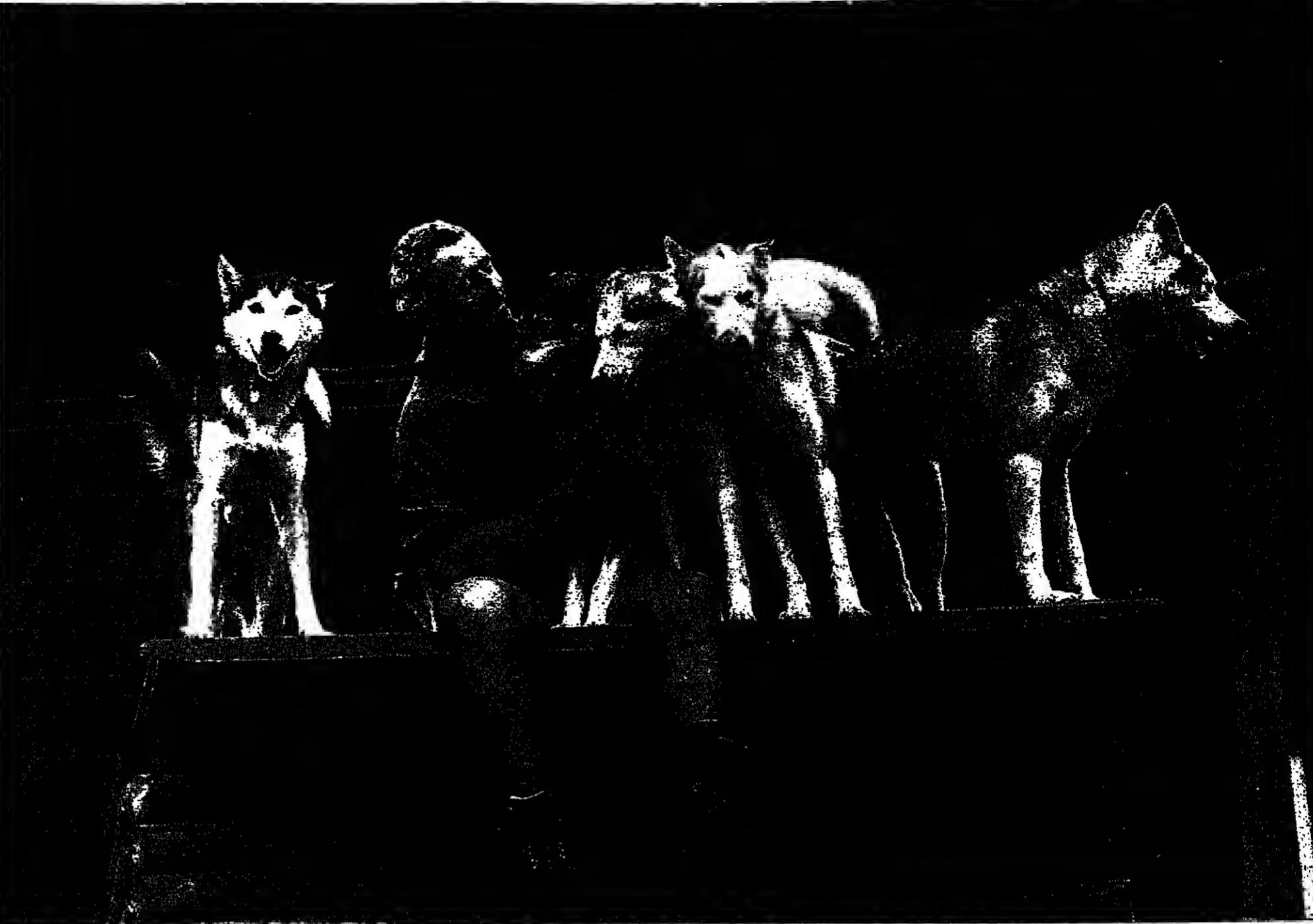
They live in lovely, rolling hills near Ross-on-Wye, but one look at their 17-acre patch is enough to show that something pretty odd is going on there. Most of the ground is planted with flourishing young trees, but round and through the plantations run close-mown grass tracks about five feet wide, forming in all a running-trail nearly four miles long. Here Mike can train his huskies without leaving home.

In his 30s he took up cycling, and won a national cycle-cross championship; but then, looking for a new sport after a bad accident, a chance meeting with a husky owner set him off in a new direction.

At the outset Mike and Marion made all the mistakes in the world. Their first was to buy the wrong kind of dog. The four animals they got were relatively big and heavy, and Mike realised too late that they were of the trotting type, which will keep going all day at eight or nine miles an hour, but will never catch up enough to take part in British sprint races.

Hiring owned Jack Russell terriers for years, the Bradburys imagined that they could train any breed of dog, and tried walking the six-month-old huskies, loose, through their sheep, to make them steady.

"Then," as Marion recalls, "we saw their heads go



Wild at heart: Mike Bradbury and his husky pack at their palatial quarters near Ross-on-Wye

down, their shoulders drop in a wolf-like attitude, and thought, 'Look out – back on the lead, quick.'

To get them going, Mike had to drag dead rabbits round the field behind a motorbike. "Then Marion used to drive ahead in a Land Rover, and I would chase her, the dogs pulling me on a three-wheeled rig. That got them fit, and I won a few races with them – but no matter what I did, I could never get them up above 14 or 15 miles per hour: that was their limit."

Today the original quartet is pensioned off and living happily in a big, grassy compound near the house. Four years ago Mike changed the blood-line, bringing in a lighter, race-bred strain capable of sustaining 20 or more miles an hour on snow. His present star is Davy, "one in a thousand", bought from a breeder in Caithness who had imported high-performance huskies from North America.

The Bradbury pack lives in palatial quarters, designed and built by their owner. Their huge, airy

kennel has separate wire-mesh compartments, so that all ranks can see each other but also have their own territories. Outside there is a one-acre enclosure, more forest than run, thickly grassed and full of young trees, in which they can let off steam.

They get one meal a day of Respond, a patent Irish greyhound feed, mixed with minced chicken. When they go into hard training, later in the autumn, they will move on to minced beef, because the fat in the chicken makes them thirsty and inclined to stop suddenly when running and lap at puddles; causing chaos in a 14-strong team.

In spite of their wolfish appearance – often with one eye white or pale blue and the other amber – huskies are gentle and affectionate with humans. When Mike cuddles one and gives it a kiss, it licks his face just as any other dog would. Nevertheless, in a pack their wild instincts are never far from the surface. At night they often set up a communal howl

– their boss has fixed up a loudspeaker through which he can order silence from his bedroom – and woe betide any cat that gets in their path.

Mike does much of his training in the Forest of Dean, where a licence from the Forestry Commission allows him to run the dogs with the proviso that he is in and out before ordinary dog walkers are abroad. This suits him fine. First, because it is coolest at or before dawn, and second, because dogs nosing about off the lead are a menace. Normally the huskies hurtle straight past, but if a terrier took a rush at the team, it might get a nasty shock.

In their early-season training (proceeding now), eight-dog teams tow their owner slowly on an engineless quad bike, whose weight makes them work hard. Then gradually they speed up with lighter rigs behind them, honing their fitness for the winter's races.

Last year, after "a big bust-up" in the British husky world, the Bradburys created their own racing association, Sled Dog 2000, with the aim of reconstituting the national championships, which had lapsed, and of setting up a body in which all enthusiasts are welcome. Six two-day events will be held this winter, three in England, three in Scotland, with 80 or 90 teams entering each.

There are no cash prizes: only small trophies. But nobody is in this game for the money. According to Mike, there are now 300 racing teams in the country, "and the whole sport is coming up fast".

Much store will be set on the meet at Aberfoyle, in the Scottish Highlands. All competitors will take their sleds along, hoping for snow. "You can ride a rig and it's great, because you've got efficient brakes," says Mike, eyes lighting up. "But on a sled you can hardly brake at all, and that makes racing on snow the ultimate."

PHOTOGRAPH: JOHN LAWRENCE

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### Full Whack

Dennis "The Menace" Pike, 34, former wild man of Tottenham, is going grey and going straight. Anyway, it was hard work being a yob: the birds, the brawls, the endless beers – and he hasn't really got the energy any more for life on the edge. Then two old faces turn up from the past – the Bishop brothers, Chas and Noel. Famously inept, they were bad news then, and they haven't aged well. What's worse, they need Pike's expertise on a scheme – wealth distribution – really – offloading one of the old gang's ill-gotten millions. Robbing the robbers – now that's criminal about that!

Pike, still haunted by what happened onereckless night all those years ago, refuses to get involved. But old habits die hard, and when he suddenly finds his bank account has been mysteriously tampered with, Pike is drawn back into a world he spent 10 years escaping. Thug or mug, he is nevertheless forced to confront a man so psychotically unchanged that his own youth seems like mere kids' stuff ...

This book contains scenes of violence which some readers may find offensive.

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5. I was captured by the Fascist Militia on 13 December 1943.
6. The dream unfolds like this.
7. With the north wind hard at his back, Scully stood in the doorway and sniffed.
8. My sharpest memory is of a single instant surrounded by dark.
9. This is a moment of hope in history.
10. Night is coming down and there is a hum of noise from the street.

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JULY 1997



The calm after the storm: Capability Brown's plans for Cadland Manor, below. The storm damage of 1987, above, which initiated work on restoring the landscaped grounds — masterminded by Gilly Drummond, right

PHOTOS: TOM FULTON

## Paradise regained

**M**y strongest memory of the Great Storm," says Gilly Drummond, "is of an extraordinary sound, like the thud of heavy guns firing in the distance. It was the weight of huge trees hitting the ground." Her husband, Maldwin, remembers that "the atmosphere was thick and there was a feeling of Mediterranean zephyr around the house".

The next day, the Manor of Cadland, home of Drummmonds for two centuries, on the shores of Southampton Water and overlooking the Isle of Wight, was a scene of devastation. Its remarkable clumps of wooded landscape had been blown out. The shelter belt of 80-foot lime trees and evergreen oaks, some of them 200 years old, lay mostly wounded on their sides, their huge root plates torn from shallow sandy soil. "It was as though a giant had walked through and just pushed them over," says Mrs Drummond.

The hurricane, which hit this stretch of Hampshire coastline first on the night of 15 October 1987, wrecked the rest of the countryside as it tore across southern England. "It was the most widespread night of disaster in the south-east of England since 1945," said Douglas Hurd, the then Home Secretary. Eighteen lives were lost. Hundreds of communities were marooned. There had been no gale like it since the Great Storm of 1703.

But once Mrs Drummond got over the initial shock, she was full of excitement. For the bombardment had exposed a miniature masterpiece by Capability Brown, the celebrated 18th-century landscape gardener, whose design for Cadland had been forgotten for over a century. Time and the over-maturing of the trees he planted had obscured his signature: the generous views, his characteristic "peeps" providing glimpses through the

**The Great Gale of 1987 devastated Cadland Manor estate — and revealed the original layout by Capability Brown.** By Jack O'Sullivan

undergrowth of passing ships, and the variety of the shrubbery he planted.

Brown's original plans for the park, dating from 1772, had recently been rediscovered in the family archives. They even found a bill signed by Brown returning half of the £200 paid for the garden on the grounds that the Drummmonds had overpaid him. Most important was Brown's instruction to the Mrs Drummond of his day: "NB. None of the views to be interrupted with planting." Some conservative cutting back of the woodland had already begun. But those faint hearts who had shied away from culling majestic trees found the job had been thoroughly done for them by the ruthless elements: The task which nature began, Mrs Drummond vowed to complete. She had plenty of encouragement.

"The 'Meo of the Trees' came to see

me," recalls Mrs Drummond. "Wonderful old gents; they gave us £500." The local shoot, cancelled for the year, offered another £1,000. The Countryside Commission supplied vital expertise and several thousand pounds. But the restoration, costing about £40,000, was mostly funded from the estate.

The job was monumental. Brown's landscape, taking up just 15 acres, is a gem within a 2,500-acre estate of which 100-acres of trees had been lost. The best of the wood was sold off. Storm oak was used for the Drummmonds' new kitchen. Tree surgeons were called in. "We had huge bonfires for weeks. I felt I just had to do something," says Mrs Drummond. The giant root plates, full of shingle, were cleared using large machinery because chainsaws broke against the stone. The quagmire left

behind resembled the Somme. But Mrs Drummond is a no-nonsense, business-like, woman. The old gravel paths were replanted.

The beauty of Brown's original garden began to reassess itself. He had designed a shoreline path, which he described as "walks among the furze (gorse) bushes". The next year, with the dead lime trees out of the way, the gorse thrived. Meanwhile, beneath the shade of giant trees, the Portuguese laurel had survived, the "shining greens" which the Georgians loved. But the Romantic movement's principle that every "evergreen bears a rose" had fallen into abeyance. Only the tough rhododendrons and viburnum had been able to live with the overpowering trees. Mrs Drummond restored flowering shrubs, roses, lilacs, hibiscus and philadelphus in the raised beds alongside the paths Brown had cut into the landscape. And she brought back the wild flowers (Brown called it "herborising") such as sweet woodruff, wild strawberries and ox-eye daisies, which would have scented the garden walks in the 18th century.

Only plants available in 1780 are being used. Now, as you walk down to the sea, you are met by the apple-scent of *rosa gallica*, Shakespeare's "sweet eplantine", mentioned in *Twelfth Night*.

Some of the older trees survive. Evergreen oak still provides protection from salt-laden gales. There are beech and yew. A Scots pine, normally associated with Capability Brown, stands like a lone piece of abstract sculpture beside the house, a tree often found in the English homes of Scottish Jacobite families. (The Drummmonds headed south after Culoden and made their money as

bankers for George III's war against America independence.)

Now, however, while standing within the parkland, it is possible to make out the steeple of Ryde church on the Isle of Wight, several miles away and across the water. It is one of the landmarks, known as "eyecatchers", which Brown used in his designs to draw the eye into the distance. And the undergrowth of the perimeter walls is carefully managed so that at each turn a fresh view unfolds. "These walks," says Mrs Drummond, "were not meant for people wandering about with heads down, worrying. They were for philosophising about the wonder of nature. They are meant to look entirely natural, when in fact they are very sophisticated and contrived, providing a succession of vignettes as you stroll along. We have to cut the undergrowth every year to be faithful to Brown's intentions. Before the storm many people thought of the landscape as a clean sheet of paper."

The restoration has had its difficulties. The years of 1988 and 1989 were dry, meaning that replanting failed to take. As Brown realised when he referred to using "shrubs and plants that will grow", the harsh conditions and acid, thin soil is inhospitable. Then the second great gale of 1990 carried off many of the surviving great trees.

Yet, says Mrs Drummond, "In many ways, the storm was the best thing that could have happened. The great bulk of these trees were overmature by the time of the First World War, but there were no men or machines then to do the job. By the time everyone was getting a grip again, the Second World War came along. The Great Gale came at the right time. It has been a wonderful opportunity for my generation. It is just sad that it has proved very hard for the older generation who may not gain the chance to see the results."

**There will be no hurricane**

The 1987 Great Storm was the worst to hit the south-east and east of England for more than 250 years. It principally affected 16 counties, plus Greater London. Eighteen people died, as winds of up to 110mph were recorded, causing severe flooding in places, a shutdown of the National Grid in the south-east and power cuts which lasted for weeks in some places. The forecasters had failed to predict the gale and the BBC's Michael Fish, in particular, became infamous for actually telling listeners that there would not be a hurricane.

Some 15 million trees were lost and many others were damaged. Whole plantations of pines snapped 10 or 12 feet off the ground. Six out of the seven trees which gave Sevenoaks its name were lost. Some 2,000 trees fell on the Blieckling estate in Norfolk. Most of the counties where the winds were strongest also had the highest levels of woodland (such as Surrey with 18.8 per cent and West Sussex with 17.4 per cent). However, some of the oldest trees did survive — many of those which were four or five hundred years old simply cracked a little in the wind, often because their hollow interior makes them inherently stronger than a solid tree.

Many famous estates and gardens suffered heavy damage. *Country Life* reported that at Scotney Castle it took a gang of six men working all daylight hours three days to clear a path to the house. And there was a great deal of damage to houses and hotels. At St Osyth's Priory in Essex, 16 chimneys came down and four stacks fell through the roof. In Essex, a chicken house containing 17,000 birds was so badly crushed that all the animals had to be destroyed. The total bill nationwide for damage was estimated at £800m. And there was more to come when the gale of 1990 hit many areas that had already lost their shelter in 1987 and so were far more vulnerable than before.

The crisis provoked by these two events did, however, produce a sense of optimism, as many people became enthused with the prospect of fresh planting. The Countryside Commission has sponsored the Task Force Trees project; grants totalling £13m have led to 2 million trees being planted. Many other trees were saved by tree surgery and there has been much natural regeneration in the spaces left by the dead woodland.

## There's gold in them thar hills

**Weekend walk:** Emma Haughton takes a 24-carat hike through Herefordshire's Golden Valley

**H**uddling beneath the Welsh hills at the head of Herefordshire's Golden Valley, Dorstone is a model English village familiar from picture books, its trim stone cottages clustering around a tiny green with a squat-towered church just across the stream. Besides great charm and an excellent free house — the 500-year-old Pandy Inn — Dorstone provides an ideal base for a five-mile round walk to Merbach Hill, one of the most stunning viewpoints in England. On a clear day you can see right across 11 counties; even on a dull one the view is breathtaking.

Starting from the inn, skirt the graveyard and cut across the footfall field and meadow beyond. Through a small copse, cross the river Dore — giving both the village and valley its name — and watch rabbits dash for cover as you emerge on to the site of a dismantled railway line. Bear slightly left, cut behind the iron gate, and head for the hills to the right of the Harley field.

Crossing Spoon Lane (actually more of a track than a lane), you see the footpath marking the beginning of a considerable ascent. Cross the field and take the Tarmac path heading towards Llan farm; although the signs send you on a bypass via several cow fields — until you rejoin the path. (Look out for two

yappy sheepdogs — fortunately more bark than bite.) As you climb, don't forget to admire the wonderful spread of the Golden Valley below, one of the most lush and forgotten corners of England.

Follow the yellow footpath signs upwards across the fields (you may have to detour around crops). Crossing another lane, keep climbing until you hit Arthur's Stone Lane. There you'll find Arthur's Stone, a great flat slab on uprights, a Neolithic burial vault dating from 3700-2700 BC.

The last mile is wonderfully effortless. Facing Dorstone, simply plunge ever downwards, past the lovely garden bordered by a stream and down the stone track to the road.

Turn right over the river, and you'll

see the sign to the Pandy Inn and Dorstone; a little way up the lane turn right again to cut back into the village past the cottage gardens and the diminutive Bethesda Primitive Methodist Chapel, circa 1864.

Time your return for pub opening,

and you can treat yourself to a pint of Dorothy Goodbody's from the Wye Valley Brewery and some of the best food in the area. The Friday lunchtime menu included pork and juniper paté

with onion marmalade, £3.50, mozzarella, plum tomato and basil salad, £4.50, and Welsh lamb cutlets with rosemary and redcurrant jam, £7.95, with homemade raspberry and cranberry ice-cream or gooseberry syllabub for pudding. Alternatively, you can opt for a simple ploughman's or sandwiches.

### Directions

- From the Pandy Inn walk past the church, following the footpath signs across the playing fields, dismantled railway, and straight across Spoon Lane.
- Take the footpaths past Llan Farm until you come to Arthur's Stone Lane. Turn left until you see the path leading across the fields to Merbach Hill. Keeping left should bring you to a gorge overcrop and the trig point.
- Cut off behind the trig point follow the bridle path until you reach the lane. Continue downhill to the stone cottage on your right.
- Turning right, follow the signs and stiles up the hill until you reach Arthur's Stone Lane. The monument is a few yards on your left.
- Head straight downhill towards Dorstone. At the bottom, turn right along the road until you see the village signpost. Turn right again to cut back to the inn.

Ordnance Survey Pathfinder map 1016



# all consuming

## The Net has many plugs

It's quite simple – they want your money. Meg Carter on going online

**W**hy do we wait for letters and faxes?" asks the little girl in BT's advertising campaign. "Why do we spend so many hours travelling to meetings?" "Why are there never enough hours in the day?" She has a point. And BT has the answer, it claims: turn on your computer, plug in your modem and go online. Ask how, however, and the answer is not so simple.

"Lack of truly independent advice on what set-up is best for your needs is a problem," says Alan Denhigh, executive director of TCA, an association representing people who work from home by telephone and computer. All too often, those offering advice have vested interests.

Take BT. It appears to be offering the answer with BT Business connections, the service advertised by the "Why?" campaign. Dial the 0800 number advertised and you can access a range of PC, modem and Internet advice (including details of how to sign up to BT Internet, BT's own online service provided in partnership with News International) – but only if you are a business customer.

Now, you don't have to be a business customer. All it

takes is to apply for a business line. Depending on how heavily you intend to use the Internet this might make sense, as although quarterly rental is higher (£35.84+VAT compared with £22.65 for residential) you can enjoy discounts of up to 31 per cent on the more calls you make.

If you are a residential customer, however, you will be referred to BT residential services on 150. Information here is sketchy. "Most customers" have separate lines for Internet use; the 150 operator helpfully suggests, "BT Internet can offer additional advice – you need to call our Internet Helpline – but bear in mind they will probably sell you BT Internet," she adds. And don't expect BT to point out that you might get a better deal from a cable company.

Retailers can be unhelpful. "You must invest in the future," a salesman at PC World says. "We advise everyone invests in full multimedia capability. If you don't spend money you risk your computer becoming obsolete in three years."

Unless you have bottomless pockets, it is worthwhile understanding what you want before giving your local computer shop a call. Denhigh says,

First consider the computer. You may think you are home and dry if you have one already, but take note. Older models with older operating systems may not have enough power to handle the latest communications software you will need to go online.

The cheapest way of setting up is by buying a second-hand computer. But take care it has sufficient memory. The recommended minimum memory for second-hand machines is 8 megabytes of random access memory (RAM) for basic use.

Next, you will need a modem. Most now also include a fax function. The latest software runs most effectively on faster modems – look for one capable of transferring data at least at 28.8Kb/sec or, even better, 33.6Kb/sec. Treat modems promising 56Kb/sec with caution as there are two rival standards at this level, and internet service providers are waiting to see which to adopt.

If you do not yet have a computer, take comfort from the fact that most nowadays are sold with Internet capability – with modem and relevant software bundled in. A standard computer offering a basic range of functions plus Net access will cost between £1,200 and £1,500.

So, you have got the hardware. But how do you use it to go online? You need a password and a map – which come in the form of communications software which allow you to surf, send and receive e-mail. This is typically provided by online service providers – the gatekeepers to the Web who allow you access in exchange for a registration charge and a monthly fee.

There are two types of service provider: access providers, like Demon, which provide a slip road onto the Net and service providers, like CompuServe and VirginNet, which provide specially packaged

and premium services as well as Web-access. Monthly fees start from around £7.

Trial and error is the only real way for the home-based online novice to work out how to use online functions like e-mail and surfing the Net. A spokesman for the computer company Dan Technology, however, has a useful tip: "Before you decide which service provider is best, visit your local cyber café and invest in a half-hour session to get a clearer idea of how it works and what you might need."

TCA's new teleworking handbook, costing £15.95 plus postage, is published late this month. Call for 0800 414008 for further details. Computer Shopper magazine can be contacted on 0171 631 1433.

Personal Computer World can be reached on 0171 316 9186. BT Business Connections can be contacted on 0800 800 800.

## Under the counter with Lindsay Calder

I can do it. Last week I finally got to grips with it, and now I'm winging electronic missives all over the world. I've decided that an e-mail facility is as important to a girl as lipstick and a little black book.

When I discovered how to check out my mailbox, it started flashing at me, and a whole reel of messages scrolled up on the screen – 49 of them, in fact. I have to admit that many of them were from my "server" – Virgin Net – there was even one from Richard Branson himself. The main isn't apparently sitting there on a shelf behind your computer screen – it's sort of hovering up in the sky somewhere, waiting to be beamed down.

Anyway, now that I know how to "connect", "send" and "reply", I have yet another distraction to stop me working when I'm at home. Not only do I have to check the post and answerphone when I get in, but now there are e-mails too.

This is OK if you have got mail and messages, but if there's nothing, it's a bit of a triple-nobody-loves-me-whammy. I received one message from a friend entitled "Nobby No-Mate". He hadn't received mail for months, and ended his message >Please reply before I jump – he had copied it to 17 people.

E-mails in a relationship can be confusing. Far from being the electronic love letters of the Nineties, there is something very unemotional about them. You find yourself writing like Doctor Spock: >see you, 7pm, Kings Head >confirm. A non-verbal request for a date fills you with uncertainty – will they turn up? Then it's difficult to

interpret the message itself. On the phone you can usually tell from the tone of voice, but there are no such clues with e-mail. Does, for instance, >can we meet tonight? mean "because I've decided it's over, but I'd better tell you in person", or "because I can't stop thinking about you and I want your body now". No way of knowing. No matter how hard you try to read between the electronic lines, the subtle nuances of the telephone conversation are just not there.

On the phone, you can sort of play it by ear – so to speak – hedge your bets, change your mind at the last minute, but once you've written your e-mail and clicked on "send", that's it.

You can't go rummaging around in the back of your computer to try and retrieve it, or click on "undo". An colleague, who fancied Mr Handsome in the office, finally decided to hit the bullet, be a Nineties woman, and ask him out – by e-mail. So, one spontaneous Friday morning, she sent him an outrageously racy message about meeting up that evening. By 6pm Friday, no reply – he worked on another floor, so she didn't see him. She then spent the whole weekend curled up in shane on her sofa, bitterly regretting her rash clicking of "send". She crept into the office on Monday morning, morified and nauseous, only to find she had new mail – her message had been returned by the Mail Administrator – undeliverable. She wept with joy, crying "There is a God in cyberspace".

For connection to Virgin Net, ring 0500 558844 for a software pack. Cost is £10 per month.



Caught in the web: BT's Internet invitation isn't quite as starry for residential customers

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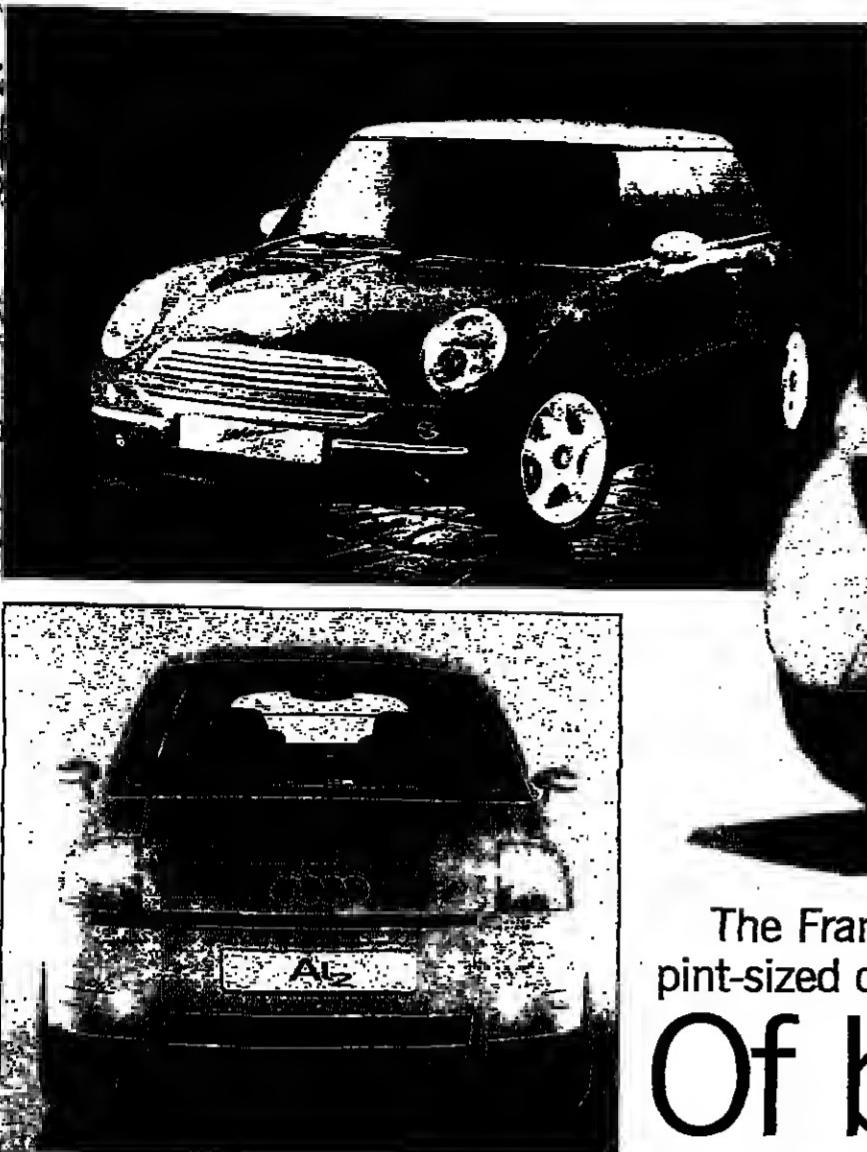
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**Small revolutions:** far left, top, the new Mini – stylish but technically conventional. Far left, bottom, Audi's A12, a fuel-slipping tot. Left, star of the show, the radical Smart city coupé

The Frankfurt Motor Show is always full of surprises, but this year's highlights ranged from pint-sized city cars to the most potent Porsche yet. Gavin Green reports on a motoring revolution

## Of babes and 'bahn stormers

**T**here probably has never been a motor show that sparked with innovative new models quite as brightly as the 1997 Frankfurt Show. The biennial German exhibition is habitually Europe's most significant motor show. But this was a Frankfurt Show unlike all others.

There were so many important new cars that most visitors left the show convinced that the motor industry post-Frankfurt was on the verge of revolution. Not only were the mainstream new models more interesting than ever, but there was a plethora of "new wave" cars. There was even a new version of the world's most innovative car ever – the Mini – even if it was shown only at a press briefing.

As a sign of change, the star of the show was neither a fire-breathing sports car nor a multi-cylinder luxury sedan. It was a little two-cylinder rear-engined "city coupe", the product of a new car maker, Smart. The thinking behind the car is as new as the company. BMW launched a revolutionary city vehicle that is half-bike, half-car. Not to be outdone, Audi showed its first baby car, slated for the year 2000. Among other novelties, it uses an aluminium body. Toyota also previewed a new baby car, to be built in Europe.

There were three new major family hatchbacks launched, including the new Golf. There were two major new 4x4s, including a new Land Rover, and an innovative new people carrier, the Vauxhall Zafira. And, back in more traditional motor show star territory, Porsche unveiled a new version of the world's most enduring supercar, the 911. Ford previewed its new Cougar coupé, to be sold in both Europe and America. And as if all the above weren't enough, at least three makers unveiled new hydrogen-fuel-cell concept vehicles – increasingly spoken of as the way ahead. Many car makers now expect to have production vehicles in about 10 years.

The star, though, was probably the baby Smart. Smart may be a new company, but it is backed by experience – Mercedes-Benz, the world's oldest car company, is the biggest shareholder. (The other shareholder is Swatch, the watch people.)

I have my doubts whether it will be a commercial success – I just can't see enough Europeans willing to spend over £5,000 on a two-seater runabout, when for a few dollars more they can buy a "proper" little hatchback. But there's no doubt the radical nature of the little beast. For starters, it's tiny – only 2.5 metres long. It's as colourful as a Benetton jumper and, what's more, you can change the colours almost as easily as you can change your sweater. The doors, front wings, bonnet and boot are plastic clip-on parts, attached to a strong steel safety belt. So, when you tire of your peppermint green Smart, you can swap the green panels for orange ones. The technical upholstery can also be easily changed.

The Smart is aimed at trendy young urbanites who care about pollution and

congestion and who want to stand out from the crowd. Power – if that's the right word for three-cylinder 45 or 55bhp 600cc turbo units – is parcelled to the rear wheels via a semi-automatic sequential six-speed gearbox. The engine is rear-mounted, just below the boot, and on top of the rear axle. Top speed is 85mph, and 0-35mph takes 6.5 seconds.

Safety is said to be excellent. Twin airbags and ABS brakes are standard, and the Smart uses a Mercedes A-class-like twin floorpan, further to strengthen the main structure. UK sales are possible, but for the time being, sales are restricted to eight continental European countries, from next spring.

That's about two years ahead of the new Mini, but as a way of countering the all the publicity for Mercedes with the Smart, BMW authorised Rover to give a sneak preview. Few technical details were available at the press conference, but it's clear that the new Mini is nothing like as radical as the old one. It's a stylish, bijou baby car aimed at affluent, design-conscious small car buyers. Technically, it will be very conventional.

radical city alternative. BMW reckons that the ultimate city vehicle is actually a motorcycle, but accepts that most people won't buy a bike, owing to safety, exposure to the weather and the need to wear a helmet. Thus, the C1 is partly enclosed – although there are no doors. BMW also claims that it is as safe, in a front-end accident, as a small car. In a side impact, however, there is no air bag – just air. It has no doors, which moves the length of the cabin.

It uses a 125cc single-cylinder motor, a CVT

automatic gearbox, and will cost about £3,000.

There are question marks about its legality, in Germany, apparently, it will be fine, but other countries, including Britain, may insist on the driver wearing a crash helmet. Some markets will also insist on a motorcycle licence.

Porsche is flagging the C1 as its "city car" solution, and reckons it has spent almost as much on it as Mercedes has on the Smart. In truth, the concept is nothing like as convincing, but it's an intriguing vehicle nonetheless.

Not to be outdone by its prestige badge rivals, Audi also unveiled a fuel-slipping fut. It showed a prototype of a new four-seater small car, the A12. The A1 stands for aluminium, and the lightweight metal is one of the keys – along with a new direct-injection three-cylinder petrol engine – to remarkable fuel economy. Audi promises about 65mpg. It too, is slated for the year 2000.

Back closer to normality, there were a bevy of new small family hatchbacks on show: a new Golf, a new Vauxhall Astra and a new Citroën, the Xsara, which replaces the ZX. The Golf is a conservative-looking but beautifully detailed car, with the classiest, best-finished cabin I can ever remember for a car of this size and price. UK sales start next spring, with prices beginning at £12,000.

People carriers in Europe are now all the rage, but in Frankfurt there were only two new ones. The Grand Espace is a longer wheelbase, roomier version of the normal Espace, and is Renault's attempt to dominate the top-end of the sector which it, more than any other maker, invented. More inventive is the new Vauxhall Zafira, still a year away from the showrooms. What appeals is its cabin versatility.

Vauxhall has concluded that MPV cabins are nothing like as versatile as many

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# In every dream home, no heartache

Kits for self-built homes are increasingly imaginative, reports Stella Bingham

**H**ome seekers unhappy with production-line properties from developers are increasingly designing and building their own. Last year about 20,000 people took the DIY route. Self-builders build more homes than the top three volume builders together.

"Self-builders are getting younger and younger," says Rosalind Renshaw, editor of *Build It* magazine, which organises the annual National Self Build Homes Show - which, this year, takes place from 18 to 21 September at Alexandra Palace in London. "Today, people are as likely to be in their twenties as their eighties. And the two main reasons they give are choice and because they don't want to live on an estate."

Another reason is that building your own home is up to 30 per cent cheaper than buying off the peg. The only way Graham and Cora Hitchcock could afford a larger house for their growing family was to build it themselves. They wanted to stay in their home village in north Kent and were lucky enough to find a plot next to the church. The owners were asking £30,000.

The Hitchcocks' offer of £20,000 was accepted but, even so, "we took a hit of a fiver," admits sales engineer Graham Hitchcock. "The drainage was uphill to the nearest sewer. If we hadn't managed to get permission to go through a neighbour's garden we would have had to have a septic tank."

Medina Gimson modified one of their timber-frame kit designs to suit the site and Graham and Cora employed an NHBC-registered builder to construct the house. Including the land, the four-bedroom house cost £110,000 and is now worth £150,000.

Plot prices vary hugely. Robert Pennicott of Landbank Services, which has a database of about 3,500 plots nationwide, quotes around £7,000 for



a plot for a four-bedroom house in Powys or the Highlands and £200,000 on the borders of London and Surrey. Mr Pennicott warns buyers to check when planning permission was granted. "Outline permission lasts three years, detailed lasts five years and there is no guarantee it will be renewed."

Deciding exactly what to build on their plot is probably the most fun self-builders have. Package companies, which supply timber frame or brick and block kits, offer standard, adaptable designs. Other self-builders prefer to employ an architect.

"An architect is independent, can advise on all options and will trouble-shoot," says Adrian Spawforth, chairman of the Association of Self Build Architects. Fees average 6 to 7 per cent of the total build costs. He adds that 50 per cent of architects' work is in dealing with planning and building regulations for people who are confident about managing their own build.

"People are building far more imaginatively today. There are more exciting, genuine one-offs," says Rosalind Renshaw. Tim and Sue Bunker live

in what looks like a typical 16th-century, thatched, Devon longhouse, extended over the centuries. Sensitive period details include random-length floorboards and plasterwork finished in parts to suggest an uneven cob wall. In fact, the house was built between 1991 and 1993.

Tim and Sue designed the house themselves then handed the project over to a local surveyor. Including land, the house cost £270,000 and is now valued at £320,000.

Rosalind Renshaw's advice to people planning

Period piece? Tim and Sue Bunker's home looks like a typical Devon thatched cottage that has been extended over the centuries. In fact it was built between 1991 and 1993

## Six steps for self-build

The plot. Estate agents, newspapers, magazines such as *Build It* all sell plots. A three-month subscription to Landbank Services costs £29 or £42 for more frequent listings.

Planning permission. Never buy a plot without it. Be prepared to work with the local planning department, particularly if you want to effect detailed planning permission.

Funding the cash. There are a number of step-payment mortgages for self-builders but borrowers have to raise some or all the cost of the plot.

The warranty. Lenders insist on a structural warranty from an NHBC builder, Zurich Custombuild, Project Builder or an approved architect or surveyor.

The cost. Build costs start at about £240 a square foot for a medium specification house. The total budget breaks down into one-third for land, one-third labour and one-third materials.

Package prices vary. Medina Gimson's kits cost from £11,000 to £23,000.

VAT. Keep all receipts - you can reclaim VAT on the end.

to build their own home is: "Plan, plan and plan. You cannot think a project through too carefully or in too much detail. And never pay money up front for goods and money not received."

The National Self Build Homes Show is at Alexandra Palace, Wood Green, London N22 from 18 to 21 September. Admission £7.50 or £3.75 for advance bookings; call 0171-865 0042.

Association of Self Build Architects: 0800 387310; Landbank Services: 0118 9626022

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# Time can be a precious thing

A big collection of Rolex watches is about to be auctioned. John Windsor asks why people find them so attractive

**J**ust when you have locked your Rolex in the safe, out of reach of muggers, the biggest private collection of watches comes to auction – every one a Rolex.

The 361 specimens, dating from the Geneva-based company's foundation in London in 1905, are expected to raise more than £1m at Christie's London this month. If that makes you whistle, consider that a single picture owned by the same collector, an oil painting by the German futurist August Macke, is estimated at up to £1m at Christie's next month.

So what price Rolex? Those in the sale will sell for between £300 and £15,000 each, not a patch on the 1945 Patek Philippe perpetual model showing moonphases, in stainless steel, not even gold, that fetched £573,500 at Sotheby's in October, a British record price for a wristwatch.

The ultra-discerning cannot help shaking their heads over Rolex. They are not hand-made: the company now turns



out 800,000 a year compared with Patek's hand-finished 30,000. Ever since 1910, when the meaningless but internationally appealing name Rolex was dreamed up by the brand's creator, the 22-year-old German whizzkid Hans Wilsdorf, there has been a suspicion that they are flashy and over-hyped.

The first woman channel swimmer in 1927 just happened to be wearing the new Oyster waterproof model, the intrepid Explorer model went up Everest with Sherpa Tensing and the seemingly indestructible Submariner dived with Jacques Piccard. Then there was the Paul Newman Rolex...

Who loves them? Not long-term investors, who put their faith in Patek, but, typically, cash traders who understand the value of portable wealth which, in lean times, can be quickly transformed into folding money without loss. That is, as well as muggers, fairground operators and car salesmen: the sort who, to BMW's dismay, drive BMWs.

Be snooty about Rolex if you will. There may come a time when you will be pleased to discover that they are the pawn-broker's pride and joy. They are a steady investment.

What was the only wristwatch that kept its value when the price of collectables crashed around 1990? The distinctively double-dialled chronometer-standard Rolex

Prince, made between 1927 and 1950. A yellow and white 18ct gold Prince, sold at auction for £7,480 at the market peak in 1989, sustained its value throughout the recession and is now worth double. By comparison, Patek prices, which were spiralling 50 per cent a year at peak, dropped two-thirds in value as hard-pressed investors rushed to unload them. A late Forties Patek World Time model that sold for £250,000 at peak would be worth only £70,000-£80,000 now, and is only just beginning to recover in value.

The only reason for investing in watches that are more expensive than Rolex, despite their Patek-style roller-coastering from boom to slump, is the belief that top-top workmanship will win in the end. Most dealers and auctioneers have at the back of their minds a form-card of dark-horse ticklers whose innards, they believe, are undervalued.

Such as International Watch Company: one of their models takes 18 months to make. Then there is Vacheron Constantin, Audemars Piguet, Piaget and pre-1960 Cartier. Movado, a first-division hanger-on hurt badly by the recession, is also tipped as undervalued.

But with only Rolex to choose from in the sale, there is still plenty of scope for discrimination. Look first at the watch's dial. Is it the original? American, Japanese and British collectors want original, not refinished dials. Some of them will wait months for a bright original dial that has been shielded from sunlight for years in a drawer. Others savour the parchment-coloured patina of age. But German taste is for the pristine and unblemished, even if refinished. This is worth bearing in mind if you are thinking of resale.

The consignor of the collection at Christie's, 76-year-old Hans Ravnborg, accepted refinished dials and there are plenty in the sale. One or two are poor, such as lot 297, one of the famous Rolex Oyster waterproof models, which has a childishly painted skew-whiff Rolex crown (£800-£1,200).

Trade bidders may shun this one, but the Ravnborg sale will not be one of those regular gatherings where dealers with an eye on their margins nod and wink and keep prices down. Being unprecedented, it will attract private collectors from throughout the world. They are expected to chase prices up to 150 or 200 per cent of the sale's published estimate. Do not get carried away. Fix a budget and stick to it.

James Dowling, vintage Rolex dealer, consultant to the Christie's sale and co-author of the authoritative Rolex guide book, *The Best of Time – Rolex Wristwatches* (Schiffer 1996, £100), expects the final lot, a stainless steel triple calendar or chronograph estimated £5,000-£7,000, to go for £15,000 or more. Why? Because it is rare (fewer than 1,000 were made) and it doesn't look like a Rolex. If you want the Rolex rectangular look but cannot afford a Prince, consider bidding for lots 205 and 206. They are Thirties models in stainless steel, rectangular, but without the Prince's double dial. One is estimated at £300-£500, the other at £600-£800.

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*The Ravnborg Collection of Rolex Watches, Tuesday 30 September 10.30am, Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1, 0171-839 9060. Dealers: James Dowling, 0171-794 3836; George Somlo, 0171-491 5916; John Das, 0956-581 419.*



Rolex watches are loved by cash traders, car salesmen and muggers

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By uttering the words 'Skipton Building Society', John Major may have started a mortgage revolution

It is possible that John Major unwittingly played a bit part in an unwelcome revolution about to hit mortgage borrowers?

You may recall that about two years ago, he was defending himself against charges of being a skinflint after the government extended to nine months the waiting period before people who lost their jobs could claim mortgage benefits from the state.

Not so, he argued, summoning up the name of Skipton Building Society, which had just launched free unemployment insurance cover to new borrowers, as an example for all other lenders to follow.

Skipton's example stood virtually alone until recently, when Royal Bank of Scotland joined the fray by offering

free cover for four years to all new borrowers with mortgages of 95 per cent or less of a home's value.

After four years, unemployment insurance costs £2.84 per £100 of monthly repayments. Fuller cover, which includes accident and sickness, costs £6.03 per £100 of benefits. RBS's initiative, while welcome, merely scratches the surface of the problem. In the past year or two, a combination of rising house prices and falling unemployment has shielded most people from the traumas of repossession. All this could change if the economy goes through another downturn as it did earlier this decade.

As it is in this context that the Council for Mortgage Lenders, the industry trade body, this week launched a



Nic Cicutti

discussion paper which calls for mortgage protection insurance to be made compulsory. If this happens, CML said the cost of comprehensive cover could be cut from about £5.50 to £2 per £100 of benefits, perhaps even less. This is because if everyone were in a scheme, its overall costs could be cut.

That may be so. But for borrowers, this would add an extra £6 a month to the cost of a typical £50,000 mortgage. Small beer perhaps, but coming on top of every other interest rate rise so far this year, it would affect most deeply those least able to afford it.

To be fair, CML has offered up this idea as part of a package which would include a £250m boost to less well-off mortgage borrowers along the lines of benefits already given to low-paid tenants in work.

But there are no prizes for guessing what some of New Labour's great thinkers are already saying: 'Thanks very much for the compulsory insurance idea. We'll tie it in with a removal of benefits to unemployed borrowers for 18 months or even two years. Oh, and forget about the £250m aid to poor borrowers.'

As seems to happen so often nowadays, Mr Major and his cohorts fashioned the bullets. Now it is Labour that is firing them.

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# No future for dealers



Brian Tora

The only surprise is that electronic trading has not happened sooner

**A**lmost my first job in the City was as an unauthorised clerk, or Blue Button, on the floor of the London Stock Exchange. For those who experienced the British public schools system during the immediate post-war period, it was a bit like being a fag. In this case you were fagging for the authorised clerks, or dealers.

They were the people charged with buying and selling shares on behalf of the firm's clients. The most senior of these were members of the Stock Exchange:

In 1966, when I was transferred from the market back to the office, I did not want to go. At the age of 21 I could have become authorised myself, but a kindly old member told me I should take the opportunity to move away from the floor of the Stock Exchange. The future did not rest with dealers in his opinion. How right he was.

Over the past three decades I have seen the number of people employed in dealing departments slashed. In terms of numbers the reduction has probably not been that great. But because business has expanded massively, as a percentage of employees in a stockbroking firm the number has dropped dramatically. Next month more changes seem set to continue the erosion of the position of stockbrokers.

The Stock Exchange Electronic Trading Service (Sets) comes into operation on 28 October. It will bring the London market up to the same speed as many overseas exchanges. It will allow buyers and sellers of shares to be matched by way of the computer rather than having orders executed through a market-maker who would make a profit on the transaction. Not only should it lead to more efficient markets, but the cost of dealing should be cut as well.

Electronic matching of bargains is not new. In the 1970s a group of institutions set up a trading system called Aric. It was not a success. Many of the institutions who subscribed watched the screen to find out what other people were doing and then used the anonymity of the stock market to transact their own business. Things are different today.

Computers have become much more important both in trading shares and in monitoring activity. Knowledge once confined to dealers on the floor of the Stock Exchange is now displayed on

screens around the City. With the ending of face-to-face trading on the floor and the publication of market-makers' prices on screens in every investment professional's office, there no longer seems the need to avoid taking that extra step which will remove the need for human involvement in a transaction. The only surprise is that it has not happened sooner.

For the electronic order book, as it is known, to work properly, all those involved in securities trading need to have confidence in the system. Many City workers had last weekend disrupted by the need to submit to tests of Sets. The result was mixed. In order to ensure the system would cope with volatile markets, a day's trading was simulated whereby the FTSE 100 index rose and fell 200 points rapidly. On balance most practitioners consider the system can take the strain, but there was by no means universal acclaim.

One effect though, has been quite dramatic. The Stock Exchange announced it is to top 60 per cent off the charges it makes for allowing business to be transacted through London. This is a reflection of the fact that TradePoint, the alternative market formed by former Stock Exchange employees, is now sufficiently well established to represent a real threat and is providing a much cheaper alternative.

The announcement that a number of major inter-dealer brokers, which admittedly are supporting TradePoint financially, will switch electronic trading to the new exchange must have caused some disquiet in Threadneedle Street. It takes competition to bring prices down.

This introduction of the electronic order book is expected to lead to much higher volumes for the London stock market, so in the end the Stock Exchange may not necessarily lose revenue by cutting charges. Its introduction also follows a period when an increasing amount of business is now handled by computers anyway. Many of the larger firms have direct links to market-makers.

Dealers will still be needed to execute difficult or unusual orders. It is just that not so many will be required as before. I'm so glad I took that veteran stockbroker's advice all those years ago.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Craig Middleton investment strategy committee and can be contacted on 0171-635 4000.



## Money for the masses

People who can't borrow from banks are forming credit unions. Rachel Fixsen reports on a concept that is popular with the self-employed and those on low incomes

**C**limbing interest rates please savers and punish borrowers. But if you're on a low income, it may make no difference at all. Returns on small balances are rarely more than a pittance and when it comes to borrowing, banks often refuse - leaving you to pay exorbitant rates to a door-to-door lender.

"The returns on offer to poorer savers can be so bad, many would do as well stuffing their cash under a mattress or splashing out straight away," said the National Consumer Council's chairman, David Hatch, earlier this year.

The extra costs in banding small amounts of money at a time put savings institutions off, and they concentrate instead on winning better-off customers, the NCC said. Credit unions - a type of do-it-yourself bank - often provide the answer.

Dubbed Britain's best-kept money secret by the NCC, credit unions are formed by people clubbing together to save their money. After a certain period of regular savings, membership entitles you to borrow at a low rate of interest - 1 per cent a month, or 12.68 APR. Each credit union has its own formula for how much you can borrow. A smaller credit union may lend two or three times the amount you have saved.

Because they rely largely on volunteer staff, returns on small savings balances can be much higher than commercial savings institutions give. Sometimes they even rival rates paid on larger sums of money. For instance the credit union run by West Midlands police has paid a 6 per cent dividend for the past three years.

Apart from reaping the returns credit unions offer, many people see supporting them as part

of an ethical approach to their savings. "Money is received within the community, stopping it being leached out by anonymous multinational organisations," says Heather Rainbow of the NCC.

They also help people develop skills, because volunteers on the committees have to learn skills such as accounting, she adds.

Credit unions are formed by people who have a common bond. Either they work together, belong to the same association or live in the same area. The idea is that members are less likely to default on a loan they ultimately owe to friends, neighbours or colleagues.

The concept developed in Germany last century but it was not until 1964 that the first credit union was set up in the UK. The 1979 Credit Union Act gave the movement a legal framework. Under this law, their objectives are to encourage savings and play an educational role in financial matters.

London cabbies often find it hard to borrow from banks so the London Taxi Drivers Association Credit Union, which was formed in 1979, has been a godsend for its 2,500 members.

"It's extremely popular because a taxi driver is basically a self-employed person, and they

have great difficulty obtaining a loan of, say, £1,500 from a bank," says Neil Cunningham, manager of the credit union.

Taxi drivers typically borrow when faced with their twice-yearly tax bill, he says. But because of the way credit unions work, when the member repays the loan, he or she has to continue contributing a regular amount into their savings as well. So next time the tax bill comes around, things will be easier.

Credit unions lend for a wide range of purposes. Often members need to borrow for holidays, household goods and Christmas expenses, says Stephanie Sturrock, general manager of the Association of British Credit Unions (Abcu), one of the two trade bodies which represent credit unions. The other is the National Federation of Credit Unions, which has a smaller membership, but covers the smallest credit unions as well as larger.

Residents of Clydebank set up the Dalmuir community credit union in 1977. There are now more than 5,000 members and the credit union was able to loan £3m last year.

About 49 per cent of the membership is unemployed, says Dalmuir credit union chairman Rose Dorman. Banks are not exactly que-

ing up to lend to the jobless. "There are plenty of alternatives," laughs Mrs Dorman, "from loan sharks to provident cheques." By this she means the notorious door-to-door money lenders who charge anything from 60 per cent in annual interest.

Dividends vary from one credit union to another. In each of the past six years, the LTDA credit union has declared a 4 per cent dividend, while Dalmuir has paid out 3 per cent.

There are now nearly 600 credit unions in the UK, with more than 50 groups in the process of registering. In 1995, they loaned a total of £75m. Changes to credit union laws three years ago have paved the way for more people to become members of these organisations. Now you can belong to a community credit union whether you live or work in a certain area, whereas before, all members had to live in the area.

But less than 1 per cent of adults in the UK belong to credit unions - a far cry from countries like Canada, Ireland, Australia and the US where between a third and a half of adults belong to credit unions.

If you want to join a credit union, Abcu will give you contact details for one in your area. If one exists, if not, you could start one. You need to find 12 to 15 like-minded people to start a study group. You then have to become trained in credit union management and register with the Registry of Friendly Societies.

The Association of British Credit Unions, 0161-832 3694; the National Federation of Credit Unions, 0191-257 2219.

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# Follow the house rules

**A**utumn is the time when people are on the move, all in search of somewhere to live. There is the initial crop of students looking for the best deal as term-time looms, as well as school leavers striking out on their own.

Although a change, finding a new home can be rewarding. Yet there are still plenty of traps for the unwary entering the rented property market.

The previous government encouraged the growth in

Agree everything with the landlord before moving into a rented flat, writes Ian Hunter

property available for rent, yet it still represents only a small slice of the total property market. Finding a flat is not always easy, particularly in a large city or a student town.

Often flat-hunters turn to flat agencies. Anyone using an agency should examine

the terms of the agreement to ascertain in what circumstances a fee is payable. Agencies are subject to the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, which prohibits them from demanding money in return for registering the name and details of anyone looking for accommodation. It also prohibits agencies from charging for lists of properties for rent.

Most landlords grant their tenants an agreement in the form of an assured shorthold tenancy. These agreements give the tenant a minimum of six months' security of tenure. However, at any time after the first four months of the tenancy agreement, the tenant can be asked to leave on two months' notice.

Many landlords will insist on taking a deposit as security for any damage caused to the property during the tenancy.

Landlords are often reluctant to release the deposit at the end of the tenancy. It is therefore best to avoid paying it out at the outset. Much will depend on the strength of your negotiating position. If the landlord will not agree to this, an alternative is to pay the deposit into a joint account so neither party can obtain access to the money without the agreement of the other.

Another option is to offset the last instalment of rent due against the deposit withheld. If the deposit is withheld and no amicable agreement is possible, an action can be taken in the small claims court.

Tenants should be clear regarding their responsibilities under the

lease. Usually the payment of bills such as gas, telephone, electricity and council tax will be the tenant's responsibility. However, tenants should also reach agreement on other items, such as responsibility for water rates and repairs.

Tenants will normally be responsible for organising their own household contents insurance.

It is important to agree an inventory of the flat's contents which should be signed by both parties. It may help to take photographs of each of the rooms to avoid any subsequent dispute as to the condition of the property.

A common complaint is that landlords either fail to act or are slow in carrying out repairs for which they are responsible. If this happens, a tenant can in certain circumstances set the costs of doing the repairs himself against the rent.

However, before tenants take such steps they should first give the landlord notice that repairs are needed. The landlord should then be given a reasonable amount of time to carry out the work. It is important to keep receipts to avoid any dispute over the cost of the repairs.

Failure to pay the rent will give the landlord the right to evict the tenant. Normally the landlord will obtain a court order. The landlord is also permitted to send in bailiffs to seize goods to the value of the rent outstanding. The landlord is not permitted to use force and cannot arrive on a Sunday or after dark.

Once the goods have been seized the landlord must wait at least five days before selling the goods or up to 15 days if requested by the tenant. If the goods have not been repurchased by the tenant within this time limit for a sum equal to the rent outstanding the landlord may sell them.

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# The price of advice

Should you pay IFAs commission or fees? Nic Cicutti reports

**T**rust is probably the most commonly used term to describe the nature of a relationship between financial advisers and their clients. But can you trust someone if he or she is paid not because of what they do for you but by the commission they receive on the products you buy?

The dilemma is alleviated only slightly by rules introduced a few years ago, whereby advisers must tell you how much commission they stand to earn for each of the products they recommend. For hundreds of thousands of people who desperately want an unbiased adviser to help them resolve their often messy financial problems, the uncertainty created by this state of affairs makes them reluctant to speak to anyone.

The issue has surfaced again in the wake of a brief guide issued by IFA Promotion, a body which promotes independent financial advice, on how to begin to resolve this question.

The IFA Promotion leaflet explains the basic difference between fees and commissions. "If you decide to pay a fee," it says, "you're not going to be suddenly confronted by an unknown amount."

"You will know in advance if the IFA charges a hourly rate. Any commission paid by the product provider will usually be returned to you in cash or as extra policy benefits."

Advisers are bound by rules, policed by their financial regulator, which mean they must give you suitable advice, taking into account your personal circumstances, the product's financial performance and their charges. If you pay by commission, you will always be told the amount your IFA is earning before signing on the dotted line, the leaflet adds.

For increasing numbers of advisers,

however, simply spelling out the difference is not enough.

Chartwell Investment Management, a firm with offices in Torquay and Bath, this week published its own pamphlet in which it argues that payment by commission increases the risk that advice may be biased in favour of products that pay more, rather than being better for the client.

This is most likely to be the case with pensions and life company products, where commission for regular-premium policies can often be up to 75 per cent of the first year's contributions. Even with life insurance company investment bonds, the commission usually paid is between 5 and 6.5 per cent. If you have £100,000 to invest, that would take a huge chunk out of your money.

Nor is the problem confined to life companies. Stephen Brady, an IFA with Chartwell, points out for example that most commission-based advisers tend to recommend unit trusts in preference to investment trusts. "The difference is often that unit trusts carry initial commissions of up to 3 per cent, whereas investment trusts carry none at all," Mr Brady says.

Moreover, he adds, financial planning is not simply about products: "In many cases, our advice is about the best instant deposit account to put rainy-day money into, how to minimise inheritance tax and wider tax-planning issues. None of these necessarily pay any commission."

Fees are not cheap. One example is of a client who wanted advice on how to invest £450,000 for both income and growth purposes. Chartwell charged him £5,000, which will involve regular reviews of his portfolio. But Mr Brady adds that all commission payable by products providers was rebated back to the client and used to enhance his investment. In effect, the client gained far more in rebated commission than the £5,000 he paid.

Another option is provided by the Institute of Financial Planning, whose 400 members also operate on a fee-charging basis. The IFP can supply details of suitable advisers to callers.

Despite her personal commitment to fee-paying advice, Ms Walford is sceptical of those who say this is the only way forward: "My primary aim is for people to receive independent advice however it is paid for."

"There can be problems with fees

in that you may have to pay VAT on them whereas you can get tax relief on commission. The other problem is that very often people can't pay the fees, which can be between £70 and



Matter of trust: it is important that investors feel comfortable with their adviser

PHOTOGRAPH: TONY STONE

a survey by her magazine, regarded as a bible by many advisers and their clients, revealed large differences in fund performance depending on commissions paid by life offices.

The register, with more than 500 advisers' names, is run for Money Management by Matrix Data, a specialist information provider. Callers to the register leave their name and address together with the specific areas for which they need advice. A computer then matches the caller's address with that of the nearest adviser with that special area of expertise and a list of six is sent to the caller.

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"There can be problems with fees

in that you may have to pay VAT on them whereas you can get tax relief on commission. The other problem

is that very often people can't pay the fees, which can be between £70 and

£100 an hour. The important thing is that people are given a choice. The pivotal thing is trust. Without it how an adviser is paid matters very little."

Richard Hunter, a senior financial adviser at Holden Meehan, a London IFA firm, adds: "We are very relaxed how people pay and are happy to hand commission back to clients if they pay fees. In some cases, after you have factored in all the costs, it is cheaper to pay by commission."

Roddy Kohn, a financial adviser at Bristol-based Kohn Cougar, is even harder-hitting, despite also giving his clients a choice of paying by fee or commission: "Consumers want honesty from their advisers and this need not be represented simply in an adviser who charges fees. History is plagued with stories of fee-charging professionals who have embezzled money, given inappropriate advice or who have been simply negligent."

"What is needed in the relationship is trust. That doesn't come from one method of remuneration over another. The bottom line when you meet an adviser is, 'Can I trust him to look after my financial interests?'

If your common sense suggests not it

doesn't matter how he is paid. You simply shouldn't use him."

## Questions to ask your adviser

- What exactly do you mean by "suitable advice"?
- How many recommendations did you consider were suitable for me? Why did you choose this one?
- How will your charges affect the returns I get from my investments?
- If a company is offering you a very high commission on a product, are you prepared to take a smaller percentage?
- Is it better to pay a fee or do I benefit if you get commission?

## Find out why pension plans are not all the same.

Perhaps you think that all pension plans are the same. If you do, then you would be making a big mistake. Here are some of the reasons why you should consider an Equitable Pension Plan.

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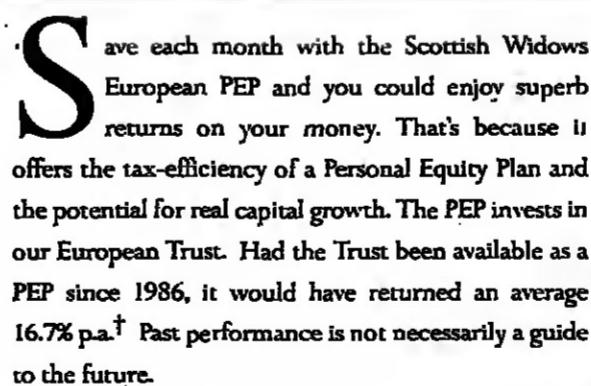
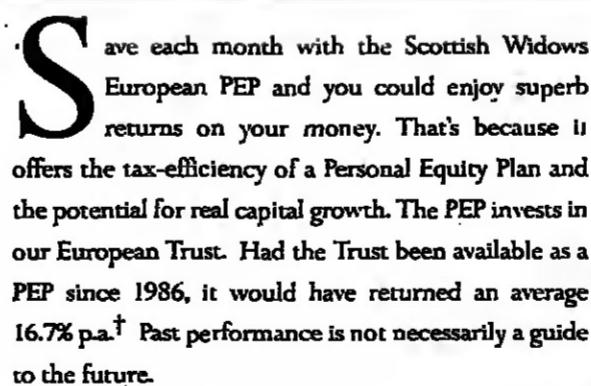
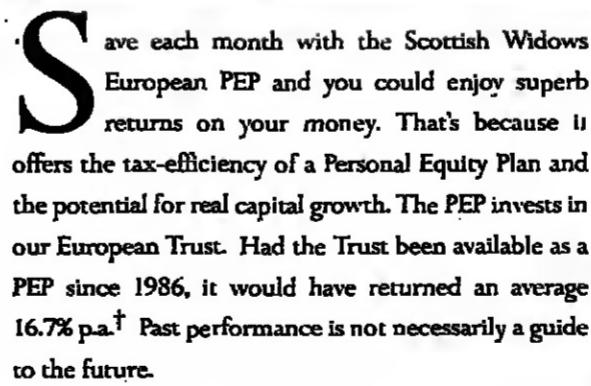
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Serena Mackesy  
In my week

**T**hirty people are crammed into Stage 3 at the Park Royal Studios, a maze of concrete passageways in that glamorous media location, Harlesden. They haul bits of wires around, spray things and try to avoid tripping over two-year-old Archie, three-year-old Kameel and Norman Barrett's suitcase of hedges. The same phrase is on everybody's lips: "Never work with children and animals". This particular idea is where the worlds of film and advertising diverge. Because, where the world of celluloid avoids the young and the multilevel like the plague, the sellers of products tend to take the line that one should work with them wherever possible. The £50m campaign that will accompany the launch of integrated communications giant Cable and Wireless (with, among other things, Mercury, Nyxex and Bell Cable Media under its umbrella) on 15 September—under the banner slogan "Getting to Know You"—uses toddlers, a panto horse and a space alien. And today, in one ghoulish swoop, these poor people are filming both hedges and babies. Production hell I realise, arriving at lunchtime on the Thursday, that to make one 40-second film and two five-second idiots they have been cajoling Archie and Kameel since yesterday morning.

Archie and Kameel are not only angelic-looking children, they are amazingly good-tempered about being ordered around under the glare of a dozen spotlights, but all the same. Sweet enough to

"Archie! Walk! Stand up! No, don't sit. Stand up! That's right! Good, now walk!" Three feet from the outstretched adult, he takes a few steps, waves his hands around and gurns. "That's great, Archie. Now if you'd just go back to mummy and do it again..." Between shots, adults take it in turns to turn the boys upside-down, tickle them and generally keep them good-humoured.

Norman, meanwhile, spends a lot of time in the artists' room with his feathered friends Harold, Pepe, Maurice, Cyril, Edward, Jean-Pierre, Peter, Klaus and Freddie Halfpenny (who is, apparently, Ken Dodd's favourite bird)

threatened your insulin levels in dressing-up-box gear—Archie in a silver jumpsuit making up part of a deep-sea diver's costume, Kameel in a green tabard and plastic amour breastplate—they are required, when I arrive, simply to walk across the filming area. "Okay, Archie, when I say, walk over there. No, when I say, wait! Okay, walk, Archie." Archie drops to hands and knees, huge grin on his face, and crawls. "No!"

Halfpenny (who is, apparently, Ken Dodd's favourite bird). There are 14 of them in all, but all the yellows are called Pepe.

Norman has put on a show for everyone, and it's music hall at its comiest: lots of going "sii", baloocing the perch on his face, wiping his eye and saying, "I said sii". The crew loves it, bursting into applause as cheeky Pepe trundles back and forth on the portable table, sabotaging tricks. Despite the certificate among agents that variety is dead, Norman is booked up until the year after next. He's an old-fashioned end-of-the-pier entertainer. Now he travels the world with his beaky huddies.

The oldest working member of the troupe is nine-and-a-half. And they are all boys, because when he had some girls, just like in real life, fights kept breaking out. "We've got probably the only homosexual

budgie act in the country," he says. Then someone appears to tell him he's on. Today we are filming close-up shots of Pepe and Freddie Halfpenny looking around for someone to make friends with. The camera is placed six inches from the perch and Norman calls out to his charges to attract their attention. Freddie sits for a while, has a poo, ignores everyone. They try finger-snapping; Freddie turns his back.

Half an hour later, a man in a T-shirt approaches, glaring at the heavens. "You know what they say in this business? Never work with..."

X traditionally stands for an unknown quantity. And presumably this was what the progenitors of Xfm (104.5FM in the London area) had in mind when they christened it: they wanted to suggest to listeners that this was a radio station that would deal with the unknown, alien face of rock — X as in *The Beast from Planet X* or *The X-Files* (perhaps, too, they were thinking of X-certificate—hardcore, explicit rock music that children shouldn't be allowed to listen to). The other possibility, though, is that they called it X because it was an unknown quantity for them, too—they really hadn't worked out what ingredient X was.

If that's so, then get my sympathy, because I can't work it out either. At any rate, I don't know how to define Xfm's brief, except by multiplying examples of what it plays, which would likely be unhelpful, certainly tedious. The station's slogan is "London's only alternative", which seems to imply that "alternative music" is what it plays (though it's also the case that the slogan has

air for some years now, having had a series of temporary licences from the Radio Authority to broadcast for a few days at a time, arguing that there is no outlet for the sort of music it plays. This isn't quite true—Radio 1 provides a fair amount of airtime for this strange, shapeless non-genre, as does GLR, the BBC's London station (one of Xfm's main attractions, Gary Crowley, was poached from GLR); it should also be said that the standard of DJing, Crowley apart, covers all shades from average to mediocre. Still, Xfm, somewhat to my surprise, does fill a hole—a station where one can be reasonably sure of finding melodic, reasonable noise, pop of a morning without running into Simon Mayo. It has, at least temporarily, replaced Radio 3 as the main soundtrack round our way. And, without wanting to go over the top about it, the thought occurs that X also marks buried treasure.

More buried treasure on Radio 4 on Thursday afternoon, in the shape of *Learning the Language*, a play about a monoglot Englishman stranded

in Spain by his love for a local girl, and being driven to the edge by his complete inability to communicate. In this case, the treasure was buried under a corny production and some stodgy characterisation—Dave, our hero, is a stereotypically twitish public schoolboy, comparing his alienation to "the Outsider chappie in that book by that frog... I read bits of it trying to look clever in the park." And the climax, in which a blow on the head relieves Dave of his inhibitions about language, enabling him to propose to Elena in fluent Spanish, was an appallingly blatant piece of wish-fulfilment.

All the same, it was something of a victory for Harwant Bains, a writer who has struggled against being typecast as a British-Asian writer in the Hanif Kureishi mould, and whose stage plays have been criticised for their bludgeoning moralism. Here, he tackled issues of culture and nationality with a deliberate, delicate silliness and a very attractive streak of romantic optimism: a scuffle it was worth taking a spade to.

## A name to conjure with

Robert Hanks  
The week on radio

comes perilously close to being literally true over the first two weeks of the station's life, while the BBC has been indulging "the national mood". But that label begs all sorts of questions, as do others such as "indie rock". Still, you probably get the idea: Xfm is a sort of all-day, room-temperature version of John Peel. Or, better, it's the station for people who liked bands before they went commercial. You know what area we're in—music that would get written about in NME rather than *Smash Hits*. Xfm has been trying to get on

## The femme can't help it

Jasper Rees  
The week on television

thus in the possession of its fourth or fifth owners. The word "shop-soiled" springs unbidden to mind.

It's difficult to know what to make of the Fransophone flavourings in the title. Perhaps the American audience it was made for is meant to feel flattered that it can handle the implied existence of other, alien cultures. In a more interesting spin, it could be that appending "*La Femme*" to the title is a niche-marketing device calculated to lure the square-eyed lesbians who have already iconised Channel 5's *Xena Warrior Princess*. At this early stage in the series, Nikita does seem to be eyebrow-raisingly boyfriendless. The single woman who lives across the landing suddenly tantalises with plot possibilities. Then again, don't rule out the sexual charisma of Nikita's recruitment operative. His chin's so big he could dig his own grave with it. (Oops, sorry.) If his libido is even half the size, he'll be truffling into Nikita's underwear by next week. He delivers his dialogue in a post-coital school-of-Clint whisper, as if he's already had sex with the rest of the cast.

One minute now, you think, he's going to nod off.

So, *La Femme Nikita* began last night. Except "began" needs qualifying. *La Femme Nikita* is a television spin-off of the Hollywood movie *The Assassin*, which is itself a remake of the French movie *Nikita*. The aforementioned conspiracy theorists will further note that Elton John once had a hit with a song called "Nikita". As intellectual property, the trade name is

nowhere to be seen. Then again, it's not as if the show's title is *Boston Plea Bargain* and you'd have got the general picture. Lots of defence lawyers all talking at once, only stopping to listen to each other when you're meant to too. This being American television as opposed to American reality, the lawyers are wholly admirable rather than wholly detestable. When we first come across one young attorney, she is distraught that she has just successfully defended her 11th drug dealer in a row, and you can practically see her heart bleeding right there on the sleeve.

Occasionally, the constraints of the genre are confronted, even undermined. When the short-from-the-hip juvenile lead lawyer takes on the near-impossible defence of a woman wrongly accused of drug-pushing, we see him begin his summing up with that tired old speech entitled "Beyond all reasonable doubt". You're sitting there thinking "this is so... so... generic", and then the camera pulls away to reveal that he is addressing his empty office. In this pilot episode's comedy plinthline, a serial flasher comes before the judge and offers his usual defence. "You exposed your penis by accident!" The other joke was the wig worn by Linda Hunt's circuit judge. Last seen, I kid you not, on Elton John's head in Westminster Abbey.

Jennifer Rodger



Whatever happened to

## Weekends?

It was the aftermath of World War Two and the advent of the mainstream leisure which created the weekend as we know it. Before this, the larger portion of the population were deeply deprived, far too busy contending with acute unemployment and widespread poverty.

The consumer boom in the fifties and the emergence of The Welfare State changed this. The moods were

the first group of young people with a disposable income. They would dress up in their sharp suits on a Friday night and leave their drab office job with the smell of burning rubber fuelling them down the motoway. The weekend was born.

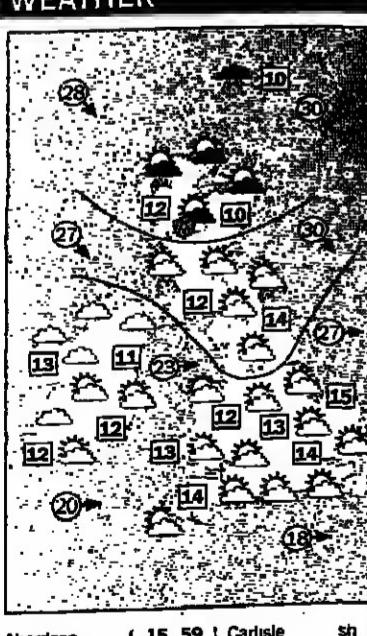
The disposable income and leisure boom was a marriage made in a bankers dream. Although it wasn't until 1993 that MPs finally validated the consumer

weekend by legalising Sunday opening, the Sixties onwards saw many ingenious ways of expanding leisure hours.

Youth culture has extended leisure hours in clubs. Ravers know the weekend as something that begins on Friday and doesn't end until they get some sleep on Monday night. But when will it end? Supermarkets are experimenting with all night shopping.

But what will happen to the working week? Mid-week blues, stress and extending working hours make an unhappy marriage with the hedonism inspired by the consumer weekend. The hangover could produce calls for a four-day week, a new ceremonial day for celebrating the pagan ritual of relaxation, away from the shops and away from the clubs. What would we do?

### WEATHER



#### The British Isles

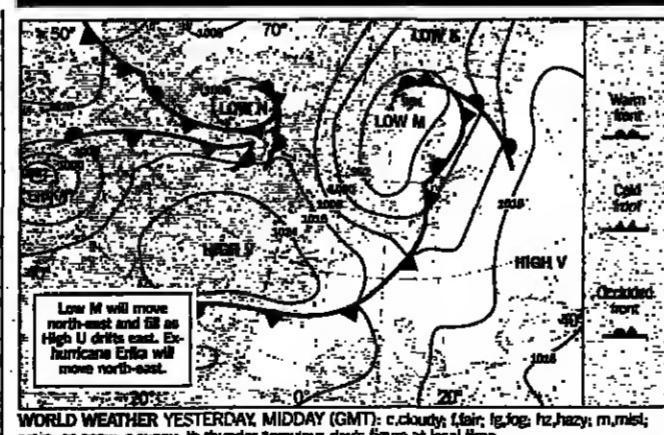
##### General Summary and Outlook:

The north and north-west of Scotland will have frequent showers, some heavy and prolonged, with strong to gale force winds. The east and south of Scotland, along with northern England, will see longer sunny spells but a few showers will break out, and it will be windy. Apart from Shetland, showers will begin to clear away towards evening. Showers in Northern Ireland, Wales and the Midlands will be few and far between and they will clear during the afternoon. The south is going to stay dry with periods of sunshine. Tomorrow, southern England will be dry with periods of sunshine developing. Wales and the north of England will be cloudier but should also stay dry. However, Northern Ireland and Scotland are going to be wet, with outbreaks of rain followed by drizzly, misty, wavy conditions in the west. The next few days should be dry in the south but wet in the north with some very heavy rain for Scotland by Wednesday.

Lighting-up Times	
London	7.37pm to 6.35am
Bristol	7.29pm to 6.33am
Birmingham	7.22pm to 6.08am
Manchester	7.19pm to 6.12am
Newcastle	7.23pm to 6.27am
Glasgow	7.40pm to 6.47am
Belfast	7.45pm to 6.54am

Yesterday's Readings		Outlook for Today		High Tides	
London	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	London	11.00 5.9 23.47 5.2
Bristol	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	Liverpool	8.47 7.9 21.17 8.4
Birmingham	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	Aston	4.15 10.6 16.57 11.4
Manchester	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	Warrington	3.36 7.3 16.25 7.5
Newcastle	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	Darwin	9.55 3.0 22.49 3.2
Glasgow	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	Glasgow	9.27 3.6 22.41 3.7
Belfast	Good	SO <sub>2</sub>	Good	Dun Laoghaire	

#### Europe and The World



WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY MIDDAY (GMT): c.cloudy (cir), fc.cloudy, h.hazy, m.mist

rain, sh.showers, s.sunny, th.thunder, \*previous day's figure at local time.

Athens 26 79 Florence 24 75 New York 24 75

Auckland 15 59 Frankfurt 25 75 Nice 26 75

S. Africa 12 54 Geneva 26 75 Nicosia 29 84

Bangkok 23 73 Gibraltar 28 81 Paris 19 65

Barcelona 16 61 Holland 28 82 Rome 24 75

Belgrade 25 77 Istanbul 22 72 Rio de Jan 20 68

Berlin 24 75 Reykjavik 22 72 Rhyl 24 78

Bombay 31 88 Rio Jnr 21 72 Ryde 24 78

Brussels 19 65 Stockholm 32 90 Rome 22 82

Budapest 20 86 Lyon 26 77 Stockholm 23 78

Cairo 30 86 Madrid 25 77 Tokyo 27 81

Cape Town 33 91 Majorca 32 90 Venice 21 70

Casablanca 26 79 Malta 28 82 Warsaw 21 70

Christiansburg 1 9 48 Melbourne 12 54 Wellington 22 72

Copenhagen 17 63 Monterrey 21 70

Dubai 28 82 Montréal 19 65 Washington 22 72

Florence 32 90 Moscow 11 22 72

Gibraltar 37 99 Munich 24 75 Zurich 24 75

#### AA Roadwatch

London, A11 Leytonstone: Lane closures at A12 roundabout until August 1998.  
London, A306 Hammersmith Bridge: Closed until January 1998.  
Surrey, M2 38-40: Lane closures both ways until further notice.  
Bristol, M5 J18-19: Counterflow on Avonmouth Bridge until August 1998.  
Staffordshire, A5 Stoke On Trent: Major works at Mill End until March 1998.  
Leicester, A6: Lockington, Counterflow until J1 23.  
Berkshire, A34 between M4 J13 Chieveley Services and Newbury (A4): Roadworks, counterflow and narrow lanes with a 40mph speed limit for the Newbury bypass work.  
Greater Manchester, A627 Bury: Temporary lights on Ashton Rd.  
Merseyside, A567 Bootle: Stanley Rd closed northbound and further notice.  
Tyne & Wear, A19 Newcastle area: Roadworks at Killingworth.  
West Yorks, M1/J47: Major long-term roadworks until Sept 15.  
Beds, M40 J1-3: Roadworks with counterflow J1a (M25 end J3).

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0333 401 for the latest traffic information. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per minute at all times (inc VAT).

Sun and Moon  
Sun rises 6:32am  
Sun sets 7:19pm  
Moon rises 5:25pm  
Moon sets 1:55pm  
Full Moon: Sept 16

